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BLACKS, BOERS, AND BRITISH

BLACKS, BOERS, & BRITISH

A THREE-CORNERED PROBLEM

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By F. REGINALD STATHAM

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AUTHOR'S NOTE.

A WORD ought to be said as to the circumstances under which my experience of South African affairs was gathered. In 1877 I accepted an offer to proceed to Natal and undertake the Editorship of the *Natal Witness*, the oldest established journal in that Colony. My connection with that journal lasted till the end of 1879, when I left Natal for Cape Town, for the purpose of conducting a new paper, which, although started under conditions very favourable to success, collapsed through financial mismanagement. My experience of South Africa extends, therefore, over a period of something more than three years.

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BLACKS, BOERS, AND BRITISH.

CHAPTER I.

GETTING THERE.

So here we are at last!

At last!—not a very long time, however. It is just three weeks to-day since the great gray steamer with the big red funnel slipped out of the land-locked harbour at Dartmouth—since we saw the little steam-tender puffing its way back towards the wharf, and knew that we were getting our last sight of English land. Three weeks only, and three weeks of comfortable and easy steaming. A very different state of things this from that which prevailed only some ten years ago, when a little crank, ill-found vessel thought well of herself if she landed the mails at Cape Town thirty-six days after she left Southampton Water. But there came a time of waking up; and who was it that woke up the Cape mail service but our friend Mr. Donald Currie? The opening was there, and he stepped into it, and all

the world, especially the South African world, thanks him for so doing. That he has made his own profit out of his enterprise is a fact to which no one can take exception. Neither can any one complain that he has the right to wear at his button-hole the little star, on the hope of obtaining which so many colonial officials in all parts of the world daily and hourly study the whims of the Colonial Office. The C.M.G. —for of course, as you know, it is to this mystic decoration that I refer—has sometimes been given dubiously. But never was it better earned than by the managing owner of the famous "Castle Packets." And it was earned all the better by reason of the fact that he did not care whether he got it or not.

Of course to the old stagers in the trade—the quondam monopolists of Cape traffic—Mr. Currie has simply been the evil one. But what then? One needs must go where the evil one drives, and the evil one has in this case driven his competitors to give the public facilities far in advance of any they would have been likely to obtain if the old system of things had been left undisturbed. Nay, they even claim to have made the quickest passages between England and Cape Town. But who cares for quickest passages? They may pay, though even this is doubtful, as an advertisement, just as it pays as an advertisement to carry an ex-Empress to Zululand and back. But do you know what they cost in extra coal and in wear and tear? Three weeks is

quite fast enough, from Friday at Dartmouth to Friday at Cape Town. Suppose you get in on the Wednesday, what are you the better? Do you think there are express trains in South Africa which you will have to catch?

Three weeks! and what a pleasant three weeks! Of course you are moderately sea-sick in the Bay of Biscay. It does not often fall to one's lot to cross that venerated expanse, as I have done, with the sea like a mill-pond; nor does it always fall to one's lot, as it has also fallen to mine, to have a foot of Bay of Biscay water washing about in your cabin. To have a moderate sea, and to be moderately sick, is quite the best thing for you. All Saturday you are in misery; on Sunday morning you have a try at your breakfast; and by Sunday evening you are watching yonder white brigantine that seems to be shaping her course for the Straits of Gibraltar, and wondering when the dinner-bell is going to ring; for the dinner-bell, as you speedily find out, is a crisis in this three weeks' life afloat, and you soon learn to appreciate the wisdom of the maxim that it is well to know when you are well off. Twenty-one such dinners are certainly better worth having than eighteen. You look upon the square saloon, with its four long tables and its ten ports on a side; with its piano comfortably lodged in a recess behind the skipper's chair, and flanked by the two book-cases, respectively containing hymn-books for Sunday and

novels for week days; with its lofty skylight, where the children peep in in hopes of oranges—you look upon this little space in mid-ocean with the same sort of affection that a good-living monk felt towards his refectory. It is very wicked, no doubt, to be a gormandiser, but—well, the fact is that sea-air is sea-air, and an enforced fast in the Bay of Biscay has its natural consequences.

Then Madeira!—You remember Madeira? You remember how, as you coasted by the little gray and green island of Porto Santo, you thought you could see the shape of hills growing out beneath that bank of cloud ahead? You remember how the doubtful edges became sharply defined, how you caught here and there patches of sunlight on the high green slopes? You remember how queer-shaped rocks seemed to rise out of the sea as you went on, and how these gradually connected themselves, and were recognised as the lower part of the island? Then you remember how, an hour or so later, you rounded the little island crowned with a lighthouse, that forms the island's extreme eastern point, and ran along a coast dotted with white specks of houses, and green with terraced vineyards, till, round a bold bluff in front of you, the vision of Funchal all at once flashed into view. That is a sight which you will never forget, however dull you may ordinarily be. Then you remember how the anchor splashed down into water as clear as crystal, and how all

kinds of odd-shaped boats with odd-shaped wicker chairs for sale thronged round the gangway. Then, too, there were the boys, who, with their drenched linen drawers clinging round their brown limbs, plunge into the water after threepenny-bits, or will even dive under the steamer's keel for a consideration. Then up anchor again, and away steaming south towards the tropics, with a blaze of crimson sunset on the starboard side, and a sparkling track of foam streaming out astern, as white as snow over water as blue as liquid ultramarine. And now, early in the morning, you hear the tramp of feet and the boatswain's whistle on deck, and you lounge up to find the white canvas—topsails and topgallants on both masts, and a foresail big enough to make carpets for Leviathan—swelling gently out to the north-east trades. The Canaries? Ah, you passed them in the night—Gomera, with its twinkling lighthouse at the water's edge, looking like a mere cloud under the stars; Teneriffe, far away to the east, and hardly to be seen from the course we are taking. The sun is getting more overhead now, and you know the difference when you step out from under the awning. Cape Verde glides past presently, with its double lighthouse, and with a breath of hot air from the desert. If you get wrecked on that coast, it is some satisfaction to know that there are savages who might think twice about eating you.

But you are fairly in the tropics now, and both

eating and sleeping become problematical. To sit in a bath all day and to lie on the deck all night seems to represent the most natural condition of things. And yet there are people who persist in getting up dances, concerts, theatricals even, down in that oven which the airy saloon has become. Theatricals—yes; for—did you know it?—there is a complete set of stage scenery and all other accessories on board. That brass rod across the ceiling of the saloon, which so sorely puzzled you, is there for the express purpose of rigging up a curtain—a curtain which, not having room to fall, must perforce draw aside. In half-an-hour a couple of carpenters have fixed up the whole thing, and, as if by some semi-providential sort of arrangement, the Chief Steward is eminent for his skill in organising a dramatic company. But the difficulties, you say. What difficulties? For all the motion of the vessel you might as well be in Fleet Street. There is, to be sure, the muffled thump, thump, thump of the engines; there is the pleasant sound of the wash of the waves coming in through the open ports; there is, if you look out, the sparkling line of phosphorescent foam rising and falling as it recedes from the bows on either side. But heaving, or rolling, or anything to upset the most sensitive stomach of the most nervous voyager, there is none. The waves, whatever they may do elsewhere, have been ruled hereabouts to some purpose.

Then St. Helena, with its weird ravines and its solemn memories, with the ladder running up from the beach-level to the top of the cliff, and its contingent of speculators who sell seed-bracelets and all sorts of relics that never came from anywhere near the tomb of Napoleon. And then, once more, into the open sea again, steering dead in the teeth of the south-east trades, that may trouble you or may not, according to their own good pleasure. Fifteen days from Dartmouth to St. Helena, six days more from St. Helena to Cape Town—that is about a fair division of the time. And now if the south-east trades should be fresh, you will find the advantage of having got over your sea-qualms in the Bay of Biscay. Perpetual sea-saw for six days and nights on end is, with the best, not a lively state of things; and about the fourth day, if the Fates are really so unpropitious, the impression makes itself felt that you have had about enough of it. Flirtations are looked down and packages are looked up, just as you begin, when you come up to London from Scotland, to hunt for your rug-straps at Watford. Two days, however, is a good long time on a voyage, just as twenty miles is a good long time on a railway journey. As for land, of course you saw it a dozen times when it was utterly impossible that you could see it. An appeal to a map shows that it is useless to look for land on the port side. It is not only miles away, but is also mostly as flat as the Bedfordshire fens. There is nothing to be

done but to look straight ahead and be patient. If you sight Table Mountain at seventy miles' distance, you will do well. How you sight it you never quite make out. It doesn't rise out of the sea in front of you; it rather grows, square-shaped and unmistakable, out of the sky near the horizon. Seventy miles off and there it is, and almost at the same moment a keen-eyed watcher, with a powerful telescope, on one of the lower peaks of that dim blue mountain, has seen you, and hoisted up his signal flags for the benefit of the good burghers of Cape Town. It is ten o'clock in the morning when you first make it out, and you may have lunch in comfort and overhaul your traps afterwards before there is a chance of your being near enough to go ashore. But all this time the engines are pounding on, and every turn of the screw lessens by some yards the remaining distance. More mountains, steep-ridged and purple with the distance, peep up from behind the square-shouldered giant that still seems like an island. Then you get a trace of a low line of mainland running out to meet it, and you can begin to distinguish between the black precipices and the green slopes underneath them. There are houses under the shelter of the hill, and down near the beach on which the smooth Atlantic rollers are breaking. There is a lighthouse on a low green point, and the staging of a yet unfinished breakwater beyond it. And now, as the great gray steamer, with slackened speed, moves round the end

of the breakwater, there, seen first through a grove of masts and rigging, lie the white houses of Cape Town, filling up a natural amphitheatre under the level line of the summit of Table Mountain, and looking as if in some former days some giant had——

Bang!

Well, possibly that gun, our welcome to the South African metropolis, was not without its uses in bringing us back from the region of poetry to the land of fact. We have got here at last—we have set foot, or shall do so directly, on South African soil—and we want to know something about the place that all these good people, both in Parliament and out of it, are quarrelling over. You, my dear good friend, whom I have persuaded to come at least thus far, did not know, when you set foot on board the steamer in the London docks or at Dartmouth, anything about South Africa. And, not knowing anything about it, you did not care anything. All you knew was that South Africa was a part of the Empire which was continually in hot water; that people go to war there in a very unnecessary and expensive manner; and that, when they get into war, they do not know how to get out again. You knew that there were a large number of natives there, who, as you believed, didn't care much about clothes, and had a desire to get guns to replace their assegais. You knew that there were Dutchmen in South Africa, whom you pictured to yourself as broad in the beam, not particularly fond

of fresh water, and intensely ignorant of everything they ought to know. As to how they got there, that was a matter you didn't trouble yourself about. You knew, too, that there were people somewhere called Boers, who have proved themselves unpleasantly expert in the use of the rifle, and who, to your amazement, do not torture the prisoners they may capture. You believed that Sir Bartle Frere was partly wrong and partly right—right when you read his despatches, and wrong when you saw the results of his policy —and that with a certain expenditure of powder and an uncertain amount of bloodshed, everything would be made right until it got wrong again. You had seen a South African diamond; you had possibly heard of South African wool; and a friend, with whom you will not again on any account trust yourself to dine, once prevailed on you to taste a decoction he called Cape sherry. All this information was undoubtedly very useful as far as it went, but perhaps, having come so far and enjoyed your voyage so much, you will not mind going a little farther.

Let us, then, make a bargain. I want to show you what the country is, and what the people are; to show you what the country and the people have been, and what they may become; to show you the root of all the perplexities that vex both you and me, and all English people in respect of this part of the Empire, and to show, as well as I can, the way out of these perplexities. This is one side of the

bargain. On the other side, I will engage to keep out of the cloudland of poetry, and to give you only facts, only asking to be allowed to give the facts in my own way, which, I trust, you will not find wearisome or unpleasant. If you give in your adherence to this bargain, get your things together and come ashore. There is—*mirabile dictu*—a hansom on the quay there, in which we can drive for the sum of one shilling to the "village," as the Yankee seaman once called it, and when we are there—it is a ten minutes' drive at the outside—we can take the train —for there is even a railway at Cape Town!—and reach a quiet nook I know of, where we may have a preliminary consultation.

Only, first of all, get this one idea fixed in your mind. The South African problem, which we are going to look at, is a three-cornered problem. There is no chance of your comprehending it unless you lay down this fact as the basis on which every argument has to be built, and the standard to which every experience must be referred. You remember, no doubt, the three-cornered duel in *Midshipman Easy*—how Mr. Easy fired at Mr. Biggs, the boatswain, how Mr. Biggs fired at Mr. Easthupp, the purser's steward, and how Mr. Easthupp fired, or should have fired, at Mr. Easy. Keep this odd three-cornered arrangement in mind, and you will have a ready means of recollecting the three-cornered nature of South African politics, by which I do not mean such stuff as is

implied by references to dates and blue books. Politics mean the people and the circumstances under which they live, and these I am going to show you. And as there have been in times past in England three "R's," and as there are in times present in Ireland three "F's," so let us say that the three sides of the South African question are represented by the three "B's"—Blacks, Boers, and British.

And now, having taken leave of our kind and genial skipper, who has so often enlivened us by the way with tales of his adventures in the Baltic, let us walk ashore.

CHAPTER II.

TABLE MOUNTAIN.

It is with me an article of faith, that whoever would get a hold upon South African politics must first of all know something, and care something, about Table Mountain.

There is not a mountain like it in the world—so large, so majestic, rising so suddenly as it does between the level Atlantic on one side, and the isthmus of level land that joins it to the mainland on the other. It is not merely a ridge in a range, but a mountain by itself, as high as Snowdon, and as isolated as the Nelson column in Trafalgar Square. It fills up the whole of the larger end of the odd-shaped little peninsula—an island surely once—on which Cape Town is built. No mountain that I know of presents so many varieties of scenery and of character. If seen from the sea side, it rises up in large confused slopes, with the dark rocks showing between. On the Cape Town side it appears little else than a gigantic wall of rock, flanked on either side by lower elevations that stretch round their

arms as if trying to embrace the city. On the third side it is, by reason of its beauty, almost indescribable. Yet an attempt must be made.

We spoke just now of the railway station. That is one of the new glories of Cape Town, a building that would do credit to any good-sized provincial town in England, with a pile of offices flanking it, in which the Railway and Telegraph departments of the Cape Government find a home. Here is a train just ready to start for Wynberg, the terminus of what may be called the suburban line from Cape Town, that carries its thousands daily between their homes under the shadow of Table Mountain and their businesses in the city. Now we have started, and run close under the walls of the old star-shaped fortification known as Cape Town Castle, from the ramparts of which, just overhead as you roll by, poor Cetywayo used to watch the ships in the bay and count the trains on the railway. Still forward, with the grand dark mass of Table Mountain on the right, the level sandy shore of Table Bay—once, in pre-breakwater times, the scene of many a disastrous wreck—on our left, past the big military hospital, where the blue-jacketed convalescents can be seen playing at quoits, till we reach our first stop at Salt River Junction, all in a sandy, marshy, waste, over which the famous south-easters howl with a fury that has to be known to be appreciated. That unpretentious narrow guage line that branches out

on the left is the high road to the interior, stretching out an already completed length of nearly 350 miles. But this is not the line we want to-day. Curving sharply to the right, round the wooded spur of the mountain, we take an altogether different course. Here on the left is to you, a freshly landed Englishman, a novel sight—none other than an ostrich farm, with the gaunt young ostriches running up to the back door of a white farmhouse. A little farther on the same side, and there is the roof of the Observatory, famous for its connection with the name of Herschel. A little farther, and the bleakness of the surroundings is gone. We are moving through a veritable land of gardens and vineyards, with the precipices of the mountain showing higher than ever through the tree tops.

No, we are not going as far as Wynberg to-day. We will get out at this English-looking station with the pretty name of Rondebosch, and first of all look about us. Did you ever see such a sight as that mass of mountain? It looks, with all the hollows in its precipices showing out clearly cut through the pure South African air, perhaps some fifteen hundred feet high. On that sharper peak to the right—the Devil's Peak, they call it—you can, with a steady glance, make out a flag-pole. Let us consider a moment. We have ascended, on our way from Cape Town, perhaps some 30 or 40 feet above the level of Table Bay, certainly not more. Practically, there-

fore, we are at sea-level still. And that immense wall of rock in front of us is as high as Snowdon himself. Can you realise it? I have tried over and over again, and I confess I cannot. Yet the fact is so. Throw a stone over the edge of that highest precipice in the centre, where the mountain seems to take the shape of a double bastion of some Titanic fortress, and it would fall at the very least 1500 feet before it plunged into the foliage on the slopes below. The foliage—yes, that is what strikes you here next after the precipices. Was ever mountain so beautifully clothed? You can trace, even from this railway platform, what the foliage consists of. There is the gray stone-pine, the tree of Turner's Italian landscapes, marching in avenues, or grouped together in almost impenetrable masses. There is the beautiful silver tree, almost peculiar to this little corner of South Africa, on whose leaves you may write as on the finest paper. Oak is there in profusion, while all among and between the larger tree-stems the brushwood grows thick. Such a mountain, so clothed, is worth coming thousands of miles to see. It would be worth Mr. Ruskin's while to come here to live under it, and talk about it as he only could do. Take it when and how you will—whether with light of the summer sunset streaming across its face, and adorning those inaccessible rocks with a glory never to be forgotten; or whether with the rain mists of winter hanging round it, when every but-

tress and bastion seems black as night, and the water courses, marked each with a white thread of foam, can be heard roaring down from far above the cloud level—it is surely a mountain much to be remembered.

Can we ascend it? Scarcely, so far as these southern precipices are concerned, though you may, with a little trouble, climb up from the Cape Town side. But we may, and will, at least accomplish a little of the ascent. There are lanes and there are paths, arched over with foliage and known to the initiated, which will lead us out at last where we can see how the country looks from Table Mountain. We can leave the station, and cross the high-road—such a high-road! as smooth and hard as marble, running through an almost continuous tunnel of oak foliage!—and then our ascent begins. If we go through this ancestral-looking gateway, and walk up what looks like—and is—a private avenue, in the first instance, we can get a peep at a veritable Dutch country residence as we go by. This is "Groet Schuur," a name best rendered into English by the words "The Grange," and is the ancestral mansion of the aristocratic Van der Byls, who let it to Sir Henry Barkly for a country residence when he was Governor at the Cape. You would hardly guess, as you look from the high-road, that a house could be there, and only at a sudden turn to the left, and as you come to the end of a tall hedge, do you realise

the fact that there is only the length—though a length of some hundred yards or so—of a bright sloping garden between you and a house that needs not to go into a picture, for it is one. That white house, with its broad flights of steps, its wide verandah—you will call it a "stoep" when you have been here a week or two—with its pillared front, its lofty windows, its hedged garden bright with roses and quaint with a stone sundial and vases, with its immediate background of dark green masses of foliage and its more distant background of the gray summits of the mountain—that is the home of a Cape family, and has been their home for generations. They were here long before the English flag ever flew from the Castle at Cape Town; they will be here long after—but this is not only anticipation but treason.

But let us now keep away to the right, and follow the path that strikes up steeply through the woods. We are still theoretically within the limits of the demesne of the big white house, but Dutch people are not churls, and no one will forbid us a passage. Winding round the side of a veritable fairy glen, from the dark depths of which the long straight tree-stems spring up almost to the level of our narrow pathway, the word is constantly upwards. And now, scrambling up a steep slope, slippery with the needles dropped from the pine-trees overhead, we are out on a clearer space. The mountain is

still in front of us, bigger, more incomprehensible than ever, and all round there is that strange still silence which sometimes haunts a summer afternoon in England. Not a breeze, not a cloud, not a movement of the tall pines—the stone-pine still—that form the avenue running up the hillside in front of us. Where trees are planted in a double row there will surely be a path, and that path we will take. Still up, then; gently, for the sun is hot. Up between the young treelings lining the path on either side; up past the point where a second avenue, that seemed at first to be running parallel to our own, strikes into it; up till the gray mountain precipices seem scarcely more than a stone's throw distant, though really still distant many hundred yards. And here at last, where the stone-pines seem to end, and where the path plunges into thicker brushwood, we can make a pause and look around.

There is still perfect sunshine, perfect silence—or, if sound at all, the faintest rattle among the dry boughs overhead, as a faint breeze shivers up the hill and through the heather on which the fir cones fall noiselessly as on a carpet. Sunlight, and silence, and air, such air! Air that you seem able to drink in like water; air impregnated with a thousand dreamy and half recognised scents; air just warmed, as it would seem, with the light that moves about through it. Silent and solemn, but not sad. What shadow there is is shadow of distance and not shadow

of cloud. It is the colour-scale of Paul Veronese, and not of Rembrandt, that prevails here to-day, and yesterday, and to-morrow, and all through the long weeks of the rainless Cape Town summer. Are those clouds, those rugged outlines seen through the trees in front of us, as we sit with our backs to the precipices of the mountain? No, those are mountains some forty miles away—the mountains to the east side of False Bay, that for years formed the boundary of the early Dutch settlement. "This is our Holland," it was said to the Hottentot tribes, "on this side of these mountains; that is your Holland on the other side;" and so the Hottentot Holland mountains were christened. Rugged as to their peaks, they are more rugged as to their passes; beautiful in this warm quiet summer time, they are even more beautiful when the rain-clouds break up over them, or when the winter snow is white on their ridges. There, a little more to the right, is the broad blue expanse of False Bay, with its rollers—you can catch the flash of them even at this distance—beating along the shore of the sandy flat that links the Cape Town peninsula to the mainland. More to the right still runs out the high land that shelters Simon's Town and Simon's Bay from sight, and at the southern extremity of which is the "Cape of Storms," which Vasco de Gama so long vainly strove to double. More to the right still, but nearer, are spread out the famous Constantia vineyards, acres

upon acres, climbing up steep hill-sides, and spreading themselves over the edges of valleys. And what in front? Have you seen anything more lovely, in the way of quiet landscape, than this bird's-eye view of the belt of pine-woods, and green lawns, and scattered white houses, that stretches all along the base of the mountain? Can anything be more exquisite in colour than the expanse of flats beyond this belt, an expanse like a carpet, in which all possible shades of green mix themselves up with grays and yellows, and even with the deep purply brown of the rarest heathers? Can you wonder that the air is so fresh and so liquid, when the breezes that stir it about come to you from those far-off hills and across those far-reaching flats?

The place cannot be very different to what it was some four hundred years ago, when Vasco de Gama was beating about in the vain endeavour to get to India by way of the Cape. There were perhaps fewer trees then, though this I would not take for certain, and there were undoubtedly more baboons, which have now completely vanished from the neighbourhood of Cape Town. That was at the end of the fifteenth century, and it was not until the seventeenth century was well started on its way that the Dutch East India Company sent their agents to form a permanent settlement here. What manner of men they were, you doubtless know—men saturated to the bone with that fierce and stubborn Calvinism which was necessary

to point Dutch resistance to Spanish oppression. There, on the site of the star-shaped fortifications we passed just now, they built their fort and organised their little State, adopting maxims of government which antiquaries may still unearth in old records both in Europe and in South Africa. Their position was precarious, though they owned their independence, and their independence presently attracted people who gave a greatly increased strength to their position. It was an ill wind for France that blew so many of her best citizens out of the country when the Edict of Nantes was revoked. But it was a wind that blew good to South Africa at least. While one section of the French Protestant exodus turned northward towards England, another section turned southwards towards what was to them in very deed a Cape of Good Hope, bringing with them sound hearts and good heads, and names, like De Villiers, Joubert, Roubaix, and Marais, that are to-day found all over South Africa. They brought with them, too, their own language; but this was a thing absolutely prohibited to be imported. Welcome enough they were, and homes were assigned them with ready good will. They might build, they might plant, they might do as they pleased. But one thing they might not do. They might not speak their own language. "In two years' time," the mandate was, "your pastors must preach to their congregations in Dutch, or you will not be allowed to

remain." An odd and arbitrary command surely, yet one that did not seem over-poweringly so to men who had been threatened with death and with torture for preaching at all. The Dutch were masters of the position, and the French immigrants obeyed. Within the time allowed French tongues wagged in the pulpit to Dutch syllables, and but for the preservation of the French tradition in the names that meet you now almost at every step, Dutch unity would seem to have been as clear a fact then as it is now.

And so things jogged on as quietly and as sleepily as they did in most parts of the world, until, at the end of last century, Europe began to waken into new life at the bidding of the revolutionists of Paris. Some small fragment of the republican contagion, being hurled away to South Africa, took root there and sprouted. Dutchmen in several districts rebelled against their own government—a wretched, unprogressive affair, soaked with all the worst maxims of protectionism—at Cape Town. In 1795 this happened, and Tory England, the sworn protector of the divine rights of incompetent kings, could not look on with indifference. A fleet and an army, with an admiral in command of the one and a general in command of the other, took possession of the Cape in the name and on behalf of the Prince of Orange. Batteries were built round about Table Mountain—you may see them yet standing on spurs of the hill, empty and desolate, and wondering how ever they got there.

If the Dutch did not love their own government very much, you may be sure they loved the British *régime* still less. They are a stubborn set, these Africanders, as indeed not a few people are to-day finding out to their cost. They would have nothing to say to the representative of Great Britain, even though he was the owner of a peerage. He might govern them, but they would neither eat nor drink with him. He asked the use of the Town House for the purpose of celebrating the King's birthday; and the burghers, by formal vote, refused their permission. So, as may be imagined, it was a relief to both sides when, on the signing of the peace of Amiens, it was decided to withdraw the British troops—the latter-day doctrine of no withdrawal had not then been invented—and to restore the Cape to the Dutch Republic.

Five years went by, and there was a change again. Table Mountain re-echoed to the sound of English cannon. There was a fight going on between British troops under Sir David Baird and the Dutch burghers. The Cape suffered for the sin of its parent state in Europe—the sin of having anything to do with that unholy thing the first French Empire. The burghers were beaten, and the city capitulated. How could it do otherwise, when a fleet was at hand to knock it into splinters? That the Dutch burghers loved the British flag any better than they did before can hardly be supposed. They waited, however, presuming that some day or other the fighting in

Europe would cease, and the Cape would once more be given up. It was not, however, given up. Plunder was restored in various directions by the gentlemen who settled the affairs of Europe and of the world among them at Paris. But the King of the Netherlands was a very small sovereign, and Great Britain was a very Great Power, and the plunder which the Great Power wished to retain was, of necessity, ceded by the small sovereign. The fact was, the value of the Cape as a half-way station to India had been felt. Indiamen could conveniently call there to revictual on their six months' voyages. Troops could be halted there on their way from the heat of India to the cold of Europe. Invalids could be sent there for a last chance of life. The troops and the Governor, and all their belongings, lived on the peninsula, pleasantly happy among themselves. The Dutch settlers lived on the mainland, in and about their villages with Dutch names and their farmhouses with Dutch gardens. Community of feeling, community of interest, there was about as much as there is between cats and schoolboys. Supercilious contempt was answered by bitter toleration. The soldier ruled, and the farmer, if his feelings were not too much irritated, obeyed. Sometimes, however, he did not obey, of which more anon.

But they are a stubborn race, these Africanders, and their stubbornness seems to have the power of affecting those who live in contact with them—a

category which obviously does not include the Imperial officials who, in those early military days, did not live in contact with them. Governors there were in those days, as there have indeed been in these, who played strangely fantastic tricks. There was, to wit, Lord Charles Somerset, who, in 1825, and again in 1827, took upon himself to suppress the first newspaper started in Cape Town, for the grave fault of criticising his own policy. The story is still told with gusto by old inhabitants—how Mr. Fairbairn, the editor, appealed direct to the home government; how the Governor thereupon sought to compromise the matter; how the compromise was declined, and how the home government, acting in a spirit which in these days would seem to have been forgotten, supported the cause of common sense and justice, and censured their representative. A free press was established, despite the ill-will of the British Governor, even though, before the right of public comment and criticism could be permanently recognised, Mr. Fairbairn had to make a voyage to England and back. If a colonist with a grievance came home to represent his grievance to-day, does any one think he would have much chance of being listened to?

That was one great fight made by the stubborn Africanders for their rights. A little more than twenty years later they had another. A paternal government at Westminster, looking round for some

place in which to dispose of its social rubbish, thought that no spot would serve so well as the Cape Colony. In other words, the determination was arrived at to make the Cape a penal settlement. There were, after the Irish rebellion of 1847, Irish convicts to be disposed of—rubbish at least in the view of the Imperial authorities, whatever might be their worth to Ireland and to themselves. The Africanders not unnaturally adopted the official view of the matter, and resented the forced importation of rubbish into their midst. On the 19th September 1849 the convict ship arrived in Table Bay. Do you know what the Cape people did to defend their shores from the dreaded contamination? The thing is one of the oddest ever known in history. To prevent the influx of Irish immigrants, they "boycotted" the government. Boycotting was, in fact, first invented at Cape Town, for the express purpose of avoiding contact with the political forefathers of the Irish boycotters of to-day. And never was boycotting more thoroughly and successfully carried out. As soon as the *Neptune*, as the convict ship was somewhat oddly named, arrived in Table Bay, the anti-convict Association issued an order forbidding the inhabitants to supply food to the convict ship, or to the troops, or to the Government officials, until the obnoxious Order in Council, by which the Cape was designated a penal settlement, was cancelled. Nor was the order allowed to remain

a dead letter. Those who ventured to disregard it soon found that they, too, were included in the black list, and were doomed to starvation along with Governor, and troops, and convicts. There was only one thing for the Governor to do, unless he resorted to military force, and that was to submit, and pledge himself as far as he could that the Order in Council should be rescinded. Some attempt was made by an accommodating Chief Justice to level a charge of sedition against the boycotters. But it would not hold water. The grand jury rejected the bill laid before them; the Order in Council was rescinded; and bread once more found its way into the homes of hungry officials.

Am I not then justified in saying that the Africanders are a stubborn race? This little boycotting business had one result, at any rate, of something of more than immediate value—it hastened the granting of a more popular form of government. Growing out of a petition adopted at a great public meeting in 1850, came a grant of representative institutions in 1853, the first Parliament, consisting of an Upper House called the Legislative Council, and a Lower House known as the House of Assembly, being opened in 1854. Friction between an elected legislature and an irresponsible executive might have been predicted, and actually followed. Whether the Cape Colony was fit for the more popular form of government thrust upon it in 1872 remains to be

seen. Only two Cabinets have as yet held office under the shadow of Table Mountain. The first was exploded by Sir Bartle Frere in 1878; the second, appointed by him in his own interest and for his own ends, is probably on the eve of exploding itself. Have you a mind to know something of Cape politicians and Cape politics? Then let us step into the House of Assembly for a few minutes, and see what is going on.

But, before going in, admit, if you please, that Table Mountain is at least worth all that I have said of it.

CHAPTER III.

CAPE POLITICS.

A VERY dull title, and a very dull chapter, no doubt.

Well, I don't know. It is, of course, possible to make politics very dull indeed, and as the fashion is to do so, the very word politics has come to be regarded as a sort of literary scarecrow, warning readers to fly over into the next field at once. I should be sorry if the title of this third chapter of mine had that effect, for I think I may be able to amuse you to some extent, if I can do nothing else. Take only one view of the matter. If you saw a large dog pacing majestically down the street, conscious of its own dignity, and clearing the way for itself, if necessary, by the faintest approach to a growl; and if trotting beside it came a very small dog, aping the airs and manners of the big one, putting majesty into a stride of some three inches, and disdainfully ignoring all curs that attempted to enter into treaty relations with it—if you saw this, you would regard it as something irresistibly ludicrous.

That picture of the small dog is exactly the

picture of Cape politics aping the large dog of Imperial politics. Everything connected with legislation and administration is, theoretically, an imitation in miniature of English procedure and practice. There is your Legislative Council, your colonial House of Peers, with its high property qualification, and presided over by the Chief Justice as the nearest possible approach to the Lord Chancellor. It is true that the seats are not hereditary, the members being elected half for ten and half for five years, and liable to share the fortunes of a dissolution of parliament. But peers they are in every practical respect. They take their ease as regards their parliamentary duties; they never get excited over a debate; they have a keen regard for vested interests, especially their own; and no one, apart from matters of practical legislation requiring their sanction, attaches any particular weight to their opinions. And as they only number twenty-one—three to represent each of seven electoral districts—against some five hundred and odd in the peerage of the United Kingdom, it is clear that on each member of the Legislative Council devolves the duty of supporting the dignity of some three-and-twenty members of the House of Lords. And he is quite aware of the fact.

Then there is your House of Assembly, with its sixty-eight members elected by thirty-three constituencies for five years. Strange and motley are the constituencies, and curious the inequality in their

claims to consideration. That Cape Town should return four members seems not unnatural; it seems also natural enough that Port Elizabeth, the "Liverpool of South Africa," as its residents proudly term it, should return two, its population being about half that of Cape Town proper. But the population of Port Elizabeth is some 15,000, and here is the King William's Town division, with its population of over 100,000, returning only two members; Queenstown, with its 50,000, doing the same; while Namaqualand, with a population of some 12,000 only, enjoys like privileges. But then nine-tenths of the population of the division of King William's Town, and four-fifths of the population of the division of Queenstown, are black—or perhaps it would be safer to say "were," for under the presiding genius of Sir Bartle Frere a great clearance of blacks has been made in the King William's Town division since the last census was taken. And blacks, of course, do not vote, not but what they may if they possess the requisite qualification. There is no distinction of colour recognised by the Cape Constitution, and with reason enough, seeing that a large proportion of the voters in Cape Town itself are Malays, who monopolise almost the whole of the handicrafts of the place. But a black who owns little more than a wife and a blanket does not present a very favourable article for registration. He remains the "great unrepresented"—unrepresented, that is, save by those who have made it their

burdensome and thankless business to keep watch over his interests. Presently we shall see who these are.

But if we regard the electoral division of King William's Town, with its 1781 square miles and its nine-tenths of unrepresented blacks, as an odd sort of constituency, what shall be said of Namaqualand? You saw, when your steamer came into the dock at Cape Town, a nondescript sort of screw vessel lying there, that looked as if she might once have towed barges up and down the Thames? That is a mail steamer, however,—the one connecting link between Namaqualand and the capital of the Cape Colony. Get on board that uninviting looking vessel, and make yourself as comfortable as you can as she rolls out of Table Bay, and rolls, sometimes under water and sometimes above it, along the coast northward towards the mouth of the great Orange River. Roll, roll, roll,—thump, thump, thump,—as the waves travel by and the screw goes round, while a hot, clear sun stands high overhead, and a hot breeze comes wafted from the land to the east. A purgatorial voyage this in every sense, extending over some five degrees of latitude, till at last some one is good enough to point out a lighthouse ahead. And not only a lighthouse, but a pier, and, marvellous to relate, a railway. This is Port Nolloth, and the railway, a sort of shabby reproduction of the little Festiniog line, runs inland nearly one hundred

miles. But why, you ask, a railway here? Who lives in this country? What grows in it? Almost absolutely no one; quite absolutely nothing. Sandy waste for miles and miles, and when the sandy waste ends, rocky hills without a shrub or a tree, unless it be an *Acacia horrida*—a sort of thorn-bush that might just as well grow in the moon as anywhere else, for it seems totally independent of moisture. For rain is even more rare here than in Egypt, while the great Orange River, which is still some way to the north of us, is in no respects a Nile. Yet this stubborn little railway goes winding on, dipping into valleys, climbing over hills, impudently asserting its existence against the utter want of existence surrounding its course. Surely, however, to some purpose and with some object. Yes; its purpose and object is—copper. Up on the top of the plateau yonder, which overlooks the singular terminus of this singular line, are to be found the shafts of the famous Ookiep mine, the property of the Cape Copper Mining Company, who built the lighthouse and made the railway, and whose £10 shares you will find negotiable on the Stock Exchange at something over £40. No copper like Ookiep copper, say the smelters, and the supply is simply inexhaustible.

But what a constituency! Twenty thousand square miles of treeless and rainless territory, with these mines spotted down in the middle of it, and

this mere spider-line of a railway keeping them in connection with the sea. Twenty thousand square miles, and a population of about twelve thousand men, women, and children; some—about two thousand five hundred—forming the European residents at the port and round the mines; some six thousand scattered aborigines—remnants of the yellow Hottentot race, who have been crushed between black invasion from the north, and white invasion from the south; and the rest mere stragglers of all shades of colour and every kind of origin. What a constituency! About six-tenths of a human being—if Hottentot babies can be included among human beings—to the square mile! Imagine the excitement of a general election! Fancy the thrill when an honourable member comes down all the way from Cape Town to address his constituents! Picture the task of conveying outlying voters to the polling places! But don't be too contemptuous. Any stick, as we know, will do to beat a dog with, and any constituency may have the honour of returning a brilliant light of statesmanship to a representative assembly. Have we not had instances of this in England? Did not Mr. Gladstone once sit for Greenwich? Did not Lord Palmerston for years sit for Tiverton? And can it then be considered matter of surprise that the dry and dubious constituency of Namaqualand is represented by no less a personage than the Honourable John X. Merriman?

Mr. Merriman is on his legs now in the House of Assembly. Take note of him, please, for he is an historical character. It is on the front Opposition bench—need I say that in this small-dog reproduction of the House of Commons there are red-covered benches, a mace on the table, a press gallery above the Speaker's chair, and a Stranger's and Speaker's gallery at the farther end?—it is on the front Opposition bench that Mr. Merriman now sits. Yet once, in palmy and not very distant days, he sat on the front bench on the other side of the House, jehuing the Molteno Ministry till he jehu'd it into the ditch of dismissal. Clever, hard-working, self-confident, impetuous, utterly devoid of tact and *savoir faire*, the honourable member for Namaqualand was hardly likely to pull well with Sir Bartle Frere. The smooth worker must have smooth tools, and to be smooth was not in the nature of that restless Commissioner of Crown Lands and Public Works. So one night, some three years ago, the member for Namaqualand went to bed a minister, and arose next morning to find himself a minister no longer. The Ministry had been dismissed, and Sir Bartle Frere, master of the situation, had found a more pliant instrument in Mr. Sprigg. It was a terrible blow to Mr. Merriman's colleagues, who woke up half-dazed to realise the fact that there had been a collision, and that they were all strewn over the road. Recrimination followed; who can wonder at it? The country justified the course taken

by the Governor; who can wonder at that either? Those were the days of Sir Bartle Frere's moral supremacy, when all over South Africa a thing was regarded as right because he said it, when he had but to hold up his finger, and the wind of politics would blow the other way. They said that there was personal animosity at the root of the matter. Perhaps there was; there was room for it. Fancy an old Indian like Sir Bartle Frere, skilled in all the mysteries of the durbar, an authority upon ceremony and precedence, a man used to have colleagues under him as servants—fancy him in his Governor's office, composing one of those despatches which have been the marvel of the readers of Blue books—fancy him thus, when, unannounced, stalks in a long and lean Commissioner of Crown Lands, who, with a high-pitched and long-drawn "W-e-e-ll?" sits down on the nearest table! Fancy this, and you will at least own that Sir Bartle Frere had some provocation.

There, too, on that same bench sits Mr. Hofmeyr, editor of that widely-circulating Dutch newspaper, the *Zuid Afrikaan*, the recognised leader of the Dutch party, precise and incorruptible in spectacles, who speaks, as you may have occasion to hear, excellent and forcible English, though with that peculiar clipping short of the words which seems to haunt you all round the streets of Cape Town. Mr. Hofmeyr is a comparatively young man, and has not as yet held office. That he will, however, be found

holding office before very long may be regarded as a strong probability. And the day when Mr. Hofmeyr takes office will be the day of recognised Dutch ascendancy. Consider this fact well; don't turn away from it with supercilious contempt, saying to yourself that the Cape is a British Colony, and that in a British Colony British influence must have the first place. It is true that Cape Town is the capital of a British Colony. A British Governor holds his court at Government House; the Union Jack flies from the flagstaff on the castle; a British regiment is quartered in those melancholy-looking and prison-like barracks. But, nevertheless, the whole of the Western Province of the Cape Colony, from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth eastward, from the Indian Ocean to the Orange River northward, a territory, roughly speaking, some 400 miles square, is Dutch to the very marrow. There are the Dutchman's grazing farms, his vineyards, his cornlands; there are the homesteads that pass on from father to son in unbroken succession. He is a stay-at-home creature; he loves his fireside better than the street; he has a keen eye, almost as keen as a Yorkshireman's, to the main chance, and he will under all circumstances make the best of things. He made, as he deemed it, the best of things, this Western Province farmer, when he schooled himself to tolerate the presence of the British flag over the castle at Cape Town. But now look what you have done. Some eight or nine years

ago you thrust upon him and upon the colony, *nolens volens*, a popular form of government. He did not particularly want it, but you may be sure he will not part with it now he has got it. He knows that he is in a majority, and may make use of his power. He has not, you will say, done so yet. Very true; the first ministry at Cape Town, headed by Mr. Molteno, was a sort of trial ministry, containing various shades of political colouring. The second—Mr. Sprigg's—is essentially an English ministry. The Western Province Dutchman has never yet put forth his political strength for two reasons. In the first place, he is slow to move. In the next place, no one has hitherto taken any great trouble to tread on his toes. Now, however, you *have* trodden on his toes. You have engaged in an unjust war with his kinsfolk in the Transvaal, and he is tingling to his finger-ends with animosity towards you. If he moves at all, he moves altogether, as you have seen in the Transvaal. And if he moves altogether, what becomes of your British ascendancy in the Cape Colony? What becomes of it in South Africa? For in the whole European population of South Africa, there are at least two Dutchmen to one Englishman.

Take note, then, of Mr. Hofmeyr, for he does not, when he speaks, speak only for himself. There are hundreds and thousands of Dutchmen in South Africa who echo every word he says. And if what

he says should seem in any way antagonistic to British rule, take note of his words all the more.

We are still watching the Opposition side of the House, and no wonder, for all the best heads in the Colony are there. Mark, too, that though Mr. Sprigg's Ministry is an English Ministry, supported to a large extent by English members from the Eastern Province, there are Englishmen of note who are ranged with the Dutch party on the Opposition side. That member with so distinguished an air, whose handsome profile and white beard attract you at once, is a pure Englishman. That is Mr. Fuller, who last year moved a vote of censure on the Sprigg Ministry in respect of their Basuto policy—a vote only lost by a narrow majority of seven. There are few better heads than his in the House, and few better speakers. He is one of the few men who can take an all-round view of the situation, and give political opponents credit for good intentions. Mr. Fuller represents the Cape Town mercantile class, for he is agent here to Mr. Donald Currie's rivals, the Union Steamship Company. Nor is he without his associates of the same class. There are men with deep purses and long heads, who think with him and act with him, and who, little as they are Dutchmen in any one respect, are strong and unwavering opponents of the second-hand Imperialism with which Sir Bartle Frere inoculated the Cabinet of his choice. For let this be clearly understood — the Sprigg

Cabinet is a Frere Cabinet, selected by that very able administrator for the purpose of carrying out his own projects. It was Sir Bartle Frere who taught the members of that Cabinet all they knew; who inspired them with a tact which surprised themselves; who made them alive to the supreme importance of splitting up the Dutch vote. With Sir Bartle Frere in England, the Sprigg cabinet is nothing, or worse than nothing. The vaunting and despotic ideas are there still, it is true, but the ability to carry them out is gone. Would Sir Bartle Frere have kept a deputation of Dutch colonists, charged with a most serious representation with regard to affairs in the Transvaal, running about from pillar to post in a vain endeavour to obtain an interview? Yet this is what Mr. Sprigg did only a very few months ago. And Dutchmen do not forget.

West *versus* east—Dutchman *versus* Englishman—the Dutchman conservative in his tendencies, and yet semi-republican in his principles—the Englishman in his tendencies progressist and radical, though in his principles an unwashed and unadulterated imperialist,—such, as you will begin to see, is the chief distinction between parties in the Cape Parliament. Yet always with this amount of reserve—that the Englishman who has his home, or who represents a constituency in the Western Province, is far more moderate in his political ideas than the Englishman who comes straight from the almost

purely English communities in the Eastern Province. Nor must it be supposed that the Englishman is the only progressist, or that the Dutchman is obstinately opposed to progress. It was by the Molteno ministry—and Mr. Molteno, though not Dutch in origin, is Dutch in all his surroundings and interests—that the system of railways that now bring every seaport into connection with vast inland districts was planned and commenced, and his successors, though completing his work, have themselves originated nothing. No, the Cape Dutchman is not an adversary of progress; do not suppose or believe this for an instant. But he is cautious and hesitating, as befits a man who feels that his home and the home of his children, and of his children's children, is in South Africa, and who does not look forward, as the Cape Englishman too often does, to ending his days in semi-civilised misery in a house, vainly called a mansion, at Norwood or Highbury.

But the natives, the natives, you ask—Basutos, Fingoes, Tembus, Galekas, Hottentots, Pondos—how are they represented? If not represented directly—if a blanket and a wife, and probably a gun, do not constitute a sufficient qualification for the electoral franchise—is there no indirect representation? Natal colonists, in recently discussing with the Imperial authorities the question of responsible government for themselves, suggested—and the suggestion did them infinite credit—the formation of an Upper

House, nominated by the Crown, with which alone should rest the power of initiating legislation in respect of native affairs. Was no arrangement of such a kind made when, in 1872, popular institutions were thrust upon Cape colonists? Did the Imperial Government, then represented in the Colonial Office by Lord Kimberley, take no care that native interests should not be handed over, holus-bolus, to the tender mercies of colonists? No, the Imperial Government took no care whatever of native interests. Note this fact well, and all the more because Lord Kimberley and friends of his, in and out of the Cabinet, may to-day be seen holding up hands of holy horror at the unyielding temper shown by Mr. Sprigg and his colleagues towards the Basutos. The Cape Legislative Council—the Upper Chamber, that is—is elected by the same voters as the House of Assembly, so there is no extra security for the protection of native interests to be found there. From the case of the Basutos learn the case of all. To save them from annihilation at the hands of the Free State burghers, the Basutos were, in 1868, taken under British protection by Sir Philip Wodehouse. They recognised the Queen as their sovereign; the Governor at Cape Town as the Queen's representative and their supreme chief. A little later Sir Henry Barkly was sent out to force popular institutions upon the Cape Colony, and to compel colonists to rely upon their own resources. The supreme executive author-

ity was taken out of the hands of the Governor and placed in the hands of his responsible advisers. Were any means taken to prevent native interests being made the plaything of popular politics? No. Were the Basutos even informed of the change that had been made, and of the manner in which it affected themselves? Again, No. Why not? Sir Henry Barkly told us why in the columns of the *Times* only a few weeks ago. He had received "no instructions" on the subject. Now, next time you are going to lose patience with South African colonists for their Jingo propensities towards natives, remember these two things—here was a Secretary of State in a Liberal and, by supposition, humanitarian Cabinet, who knew and cared so little about South African affairs as to fling a whole native population bound hand and foot into the fiery furnace of popular politics. And here was a Governor and High Commissioner with so small a sense of responsibility as to plead the fact that he had "no instructions" as an excuse for the gravest omission of duty. No instructions! A man might as well plead that he had no instructions to save his grandmother from drowning!

Hinc illæ lacrymæ: the Basutos are a lawful prey to Mr. Sprigg, who has attempted to inform them as to his powers by styling himself "The Master of the Colony." Lord Kimberley frets and fumes, and mildly deprecates, and weakly censures. But if pro-

phets could be in these days sent to English Cabinet ministers as they were once sent to Hebrew kings, and some prophet could tell Lord Kimberley in a parable the story of the Basutos, and ask him to declare with whom the responsibility for the wrong and the bloodshed lies, do you think the result of the interview would materially differ from the result of the interview of Nathan with David? I trow not. The Basutos appeal to the Queen, whom they recognise as their sovereign. They know that if they could once appeal direct to the Queen, they would have the fullest consideration shown to their petitions and representations. But the fiat of the Colonial Office has gone forth—a fiat as unalterable as the law of the Medes and Persians. The Colonial Office, which is responsible for things being as they are, can do nothing to protect those who are thereby victimised. Surely it must have been with Colonial Office red-tape that Daniel was bound when he was thrown to the lions! And surely Lord Kimberley, when he goes and cries with a lamentable voice, and asks the Basutos how they are getting on, must know in his heart that the time is past when either monarchs or ministers can be saved by a miracle from the consequences of their own guilty weakness!

It is not altogether a joke, then, is it, this question of Cape politics? The small dog with the three inch stride has yet considerable power over

human life and human happiness. And there is one man on the Opposition benches in this House of Assembly who knows it. You hear that thin, clear, somewhat strident voice that is now being listened to in breathless silence? You hear fact piled upon fact, argument upon argument, the keen cutting sarcasm alternating with the stern denunciation? That voice is worth listening to, for it is the voice of the man who, through evil report and good report, has made the cause of the natives his own. But adequately to understand the power of the voice, and of the mind from which it speaks, you must understand the weakness of the man. That is an old man's head upon—let us speak low—upon a child's body. Arrest of developement, inherited tendency, something there was—no one knows what—that left the body puny like that of a dwarf, but did not touch the mind and the brain. There need be no delicacy in alluding to a fact that every one in South Africa knows—to a fact that, in all right feeling minds, secures a double respect for the owner of the voice we are listening to. An old man's head and face, every line and feature instinct with knowledge and intelligence that show themselves at every turn of a speech to which you listen without wearying. You feel, without knowing why, that you are listening to the words of a man whose influence is not limited within South African boundaries. And you are right; for that is none other than Mr. Saul Solomon,

the proprietor of the *Cape Argus*, a political party in himself, a maker of Ministries, the unflinching advocate of native rights, the fearless exposer of native wrongs, the most influential man, without exception, in the whole South African continent.

No; Mr. Saul Solomon is not a Cabinet Minister, has never been one, and probably never will be. He is rather a maker and an adviser of Ministries. He was in the councils of the Molteno Ministry, and it was to him that Mr. Sprigg first resorted for advice when the Molteno Ministry was dismissed, and he himself took office. It was from Mr. Saul Solomon that Mr. Sprigg constantly sought advice, till he thought he was strong enough to turn round and abuse his political helper, and, in earlier times, political patron. To identify himself with one party or another would lessen his influence. Besides, he is in complete sympathy with neither. His path lies by itself, and will not easily amalgamate with that of either Dutch or English politicians. On constitutional points he will stand as firm and determined as the most republican Dutchman; but on points of native policy Dutchmen somewhat suspect him. The difference, however, is likely to be bridged over. Mr. Saul Solomon would see the native tribes that are still intact in South Africa placed under the direct control of the Crown, and saved from the disastrous influence of colonial party politics. The Transvaal Boers themselves, as we have seen, would

provide for some kind of arbitration pointing in the same direction. Hence Mr. Saul Solomon is to-day on the Dutch side, and his paper, the *Argus*, adopts the Dutch cause. A significant alliance enough; can it mean that the best friends of the South African native on the spot are convinced that Dutch treatment of the natives is to be preferred to English? We may come later upon some facts bearing on this important question.

No; Mr. Saul Solomon is not a Cabinet Minister; it is enough for him to be Mr. Saul Solomon. But how is it possible not to wonder at and admire the energy and resolution of the man who, in spite of disadvantages that might easily have withheld him for ever within the circle of private life, has not only taken a prominent part in public life, but a part which is, on the whole, eminently unpopular? No one, during the last three years at least, has been more abused in Cape Town, and in South Africa at large, than Mr. Saul Solomon. He has, for his earnest advocacy of native interests, had the most outrageous charges levelled against him. He has been accused of promoting rebellion among native tribes to serve his own ends. He has been silenced at public meetings, vilified by a Jingo press, caricatured even—though it may hardly seem credible—by the varlets and pot-lickers of a sham Imperialism. Yet he has neither flinched nor swerved, and brings the same guns to bear on his enemies again and

again with the most unshaken pertinacity. He is a man to be reckoned with, a man to get upon your side. But if you get him upon your side, it will not be by cajoling, or by indirect bribery, but by the pure weight of logic and of reason.

CHAPTER IV.

CAPE WINE.

WHY should it be taken for granted that Cape wine can only be a synonym for everything that is sour and inferior and undrinkable? That the fact is so is beyond doubt. It was one of the visible signs, you may remember, of poor old Sedley's low social condition in *Vanity Fair*, that he brought out Cape sherry to regale his friends. One can see and feel the shudder that ran through his visitors at the bare suggestion, the haste to make some excuse, such as Squire Hazeldean offered, when Dr. Riccabocca invited him to partake of wine which was pure, and of his own making.

It is true, it is to be feared, that what passes in the English market by the name of Cape wine deserves everything bad that can be said of it. It is horrible stuff; doctored, fortified, made cheap for the consumption of people who cannot afford to pay dear. How much that is sold of inferior wine under other names is really manufactured from Cape wine, is a question. But the fact is indisputable that, as

things stand at present, to designate wine of any kind as coming from the Cape is just the same as to give a dog an ill name. You may as well hang the dog, and spile the wine casks, at once, for all that sober respectable people will have to say to one or the other.

Is the verdict deserved? Partly yes, but still more partly no. Why the grape should not, under favourable conditions, grow as well in the southern hemisphere as in the northern, it seems hard to say. Grant the climate and the soil, and the fitness of the original plant, and, provided the same skill is there in the possession of wine-growers and wine-makers, it seems to follow that there must be an equally valuable result. Take the mere question of latitude. There is not a vineyard in Europe nearer to the equator than 36 degrees. The latitude of Cape Town, however, is 34 degrees. Take the climate. What do you want better? There are the rich soft rains of the Cape winter; these begin in April and keep on, with breaks of fine weather, to October. There is the clear dry heat of summer, lasting, settled, and certain, from October to April. There is none of the frost which is the dread of wine cultivators in Europe. It is impossible at the Cape, as it may happen in every wine-growing country in Europe, for a single night's late frost to nip all your young shoots and spoil your crop for the season. As for soil, where could a better be found? Take

the slopes of Table Mountain as typical of what is to be found scattered all over the western part of the Cape Colony. What is the soil of those slopes composed of? Those rocks that form the upper precipices of the mountain, mostly unfossiliferous old sandstone as they are, are veined and traversed all through with rocks more or less volcanic in their origin. Every shower that has washed down the face of those huge precipices for hundreds of thousands of years has carried with it tiny particles of the yielding rock, and deposited them over the lower slopes in that beautiful concave curve which, almost a generation ago, Mr. Ruskin first taught unscientific people to understand and to admire. There, too, from year to year, as vegetation has died out and been renewed, the vegetable deposit, held firmly in the rock ledges, has increased and thickened till the soil is the richest in the world—the soil that the grape vine loves above all others. Is it to be supposed that the Huguenot immigrants, coming hither from the vineyards of France two centuries ago, did not know a good vine-growing soil when they saw it? Settling down in Stellenbosch and around the Paarl—quaint Dutch towns which you should visit if you have time—they put into the ground the vine cuttings they had brought, as if by mere chance, from their deserted fields in Europe. The success of the experiment was clear, and the example proved contagious. A year or two later,

under the care of a member of the old Cape family of the Van der Stells, the vineyards were planted at Constantia.

Every one goes to Constantia who gets a chance in passing through Cape Town; and though it by no means follows that the Constantia vineyards grow the best wine, or are best worth seeing, they are worthy of a look, if only for the exquisite beauty of the drive thither, and of their surroundings. It is not very far; you may, if you like, travel by the little suburban railway we traversed just now, only, instead of alighting on the way, go on to its terminus at Wynberg. There, if you choose, you may select one out of a numerous attendance of Cape carts with Malay drivers waiting for hire, and pay ten shillings for the drive to Constantia and back, including waiting as long as you please at your destination. It is, however, far more pleasant to take a cart from Cape Town, if you have not your own private conveyance, and no one offers to drive you, and keep to the road. Do you know what a Cape cart is? It is a peculiar, but pleasant, institution—something like what was once in England called a "Whitechapel," on a pair of high wheels, with a cosy leather or canvas hood, and drawn by a pair of horses. It will hold four people easily, and can often be made to hold six; and, with a good pair of horses, can be made, along the smooth hard roads of the Colony, to go almost any pace you please.

Here we are, then, on the road, but pray don't expect to enjoy yourself for the first mile or two. Of all the desolate, unkempt looking places in the world, this suburb of Cape Town, as we drive out under the shadow of the mountain, is the most unkempt and desolate you can well picture. The reason is clear; this is not an acceptable side of the town, and no one lives here who can possibly avoid it. For it is here that the celebrated south-easter—the "Cape Doctor," as Anglo-Indians were in olden days wont to call it—blows its strongest. And the "Cape Doctor's" strongest is no joke. Where it comes from no one quite knows; for it is a purely local wind, and it always seems possible to get behind it by going a few miles to windward. Some people aver that it is brewed at the top of the mountain, and comes down just upon Cape Town itself, and nowhere else. That all sorts of queer things go on on the top of the mountain is clear; witness, for instance, the celebrated white tablecloth that hangs over it whenever a south-easter is at work. But wherever it comes from, it is an unmistakable reality, as you soon find out as it whirls barrow-loads of gravel in your face, or spins you round like a teetotum at a street corner. It is lucky that on this day of our drive to Constantia we have not to face it, as you would then learn at last what dust means—dust whirled up from a red ironstone road, choking you, blinding you, making you despair of existence.

But there is nothing of this kind to-day. Table Mountain is as clear of cloud as though south-easters never had had any place in the natural economy of things; the air is as soft and tender as a poet's dream; the dust is well laid down to the hard road along which we bowl smoothly at the rate of twelve miles an hour. For there has been—an unusual thing for this grape time of the year—a shower in the early morning, and far away there to the south-east the clouds are still hanging round and between the sharp peaks of the Hottentot Holland Mountains, bringing out into relief angles and buttresses whose existence you never before suspected. Two miles, or say three miles, and Cape Town has disappeared as completely as if it had been rubbed out of existence. We have turned the angle of the great mountain—a fact which you become startlingly aware of when you find the outline you watched from Cape Town exactly reversed. And as we turn the angle, desolation ceases, and something like paradise begins. The road is a perfect avenue, with the level vineyards on the left, the slopes of the mountain, here green and bright with the dwarf vines, there darkly shadowed by close-growing fir-trees, on the right. Or where the vineyards cease, you have a continuous line of rose-covered cottages, or quaint Dutch-built houses, shadowed by immemorial oaks, and with the nets set for lawn tennis on the carefully levelled sward. Here, from a schoolhouse door, come a crowd

of children of all colours, unmistakably white, doubtfully brown, indubitably black. Those brown-faced, black-eyed children are a peculiar product of the place—a result of the mingling of half-a-dozen distinct races at one of the street-corners of the world. And here is—fortunate that we are to see it—a Malay holiday party in a far smarter cart than our own, and with a pair of horses that take the wind out of our sails altogether. Did you ever see such gorgeousness of array, both male and female? Would you venture to make a bet as to the value of the clothes of the whole party? There is not an inch of silk, not a yard of muslin—and how many yards of muslin Malay women consume in their innumerable skirts, I should be sorry to have to say—that is not of the finest and of the best quality. There is not a sparkle of jewellery that is not genuine. How they live at home, crowded together in insanitary filthiness in the back slums of Cape Town, it were better not to inquire. How they enjoy themselves when they go out for a holiday, no one seems to know. But take a Malay on his way from his home to his holiday, and he is a thing of wonder and of beauty. To-morrow, may be, he will be driving your carriage or mending your window; to-day he is as gorgeous as Solomon, and nothing else.

But now, deeming ourselves, save for the sharp-pointed aloes on the roadside banks, in the midst of Derbyshire lanes, we leave the high road. Not that

we need, but that our cunning Jehu would take us by a quieter route that skirts the mountain a little higher up. The mountain, as we drive on, still goes with us. There is still its clear edge, high overhead, against the clearest blue sky; still its solemn masses of rock rising up perpendicularly from among the tree-tops; still glimpses of the mingled foliage of silver tree, pine, and oak clothing the slopes. Shall we never get rid of it? It is only when we have come upon and passed the pretty white church at Wynberg that the mountain seems to alter, when we get well in front of the dip beyond which, as we are told, lies the Atlantic, rolling its blue breakers into a land-locked bay. And now the country seems all at once to flatten and roll out. The roads are more level, the fields wider; instead of thick plantations, we have only single lines of trees in the hedgerows. Right and left of us, and in front of us—covering the level ground and reaching up every visible slope—are the Constantia vineyards. And here, after shooting through a stone gateway, and rolling up a long drive between shrubberies, here we are drawing up at the very door of Mynheer Van Renen's mansion. You need not be shy, or apologise very deeply; visitors from Cape Town are almost a daily phenomenon, and the old spirit of Dutch hospitality is as full and as sound as ever.

Well, you have seen it all, and you are, to say truth, a little disappointed. You have seen the large

vats in the storehouse; you have tasted half-a-dozen different varieties of Pontac, including that wonderful wine which your host sent over, by way of a joke, to the Philadelphia Exhibition, and won a prize with; you have seen that charming old-fashioned drawing-room, that looks as if it had come straight to you out of the reign of Queen Anne. And this is all. You can see, plainly enough, that there are plenty of grapes to be had, and you can testify that wine, some of it good, some of it indifferent, is made from them. As for theories of grape growing, you have not time to digest them, nor do you perhaps wish to do so. Very good; only take this fact into your mind, and expand it in your imagination—that even here, at the traditional head-quarters of grape-growing, there are, for every acre already under cultivation, at least ten acres fitted for the same purpose. And if you ask why they are not cultivated, the answer, which is twofold, is equally suggestive—first, because a small estate pays its owner so well that there is no great temptation to extend operations; and next, because so long as Cape wine-farmers are unable to take general advantage of foreign markets, they are growing and making as much wine and brandy as they can do with.

Here you are placed, then, in contact with the crucial point of the whole matter. Keep these pleasant vineyards of Constantia in your mind's eye; multiply them by the vineyards spread all over this

rural Western Province; think of the vineyards at Stellenbosch and at the Paarl; the vineyards that you may see lining the whole course of the railway to the interior, when once the sandy flat near Cape Town has been crossed, for a length of forty miles or more; think of the hundreds of families living in comfort, often in wealth, upon the products of their vineyards; and then think of the thousands upon thousands of acres upon which, were the foreign markets only more accessible, the vine might be planted with success. Do you, taking these facts into consideration, see no great and growing future for this country, provided only the corner can be turned, and—a fact which I forgot—Sir Wilfrid Lawson does not become absolutely supreme in the universe?

What is the corner to be got round? Simply this—that the Cape wine farmer has got into a rough and ready way of growing his grapes and making his wine, and it is difficult, very difficult, to get him out of it. Why should he get out of it? he asks. He brings his grapes in from the vineyard, and as soon as fermentation has well set in, he checks it by adding as much alcohol as is requisite. The result is a wine that he can place almost at once on the market, and which you can buy retail at sixpence or sevenpence a bottle, and drink, notwithstanding its sweetness, with a certain amount of enjoyment. But that is not a wine which you can export, evidently; and the

difficulty is to get the Cape wine-grower to try another system, and to wait for a year or two till he has got something which he can, with a due regard for his own reputation, send abroad. Suppose, for example, by a greater care in the selection of your grapes and your modes of fermentation, you could, all over this Western Province, produce a light, sound, unfortified wine, with a character of its own, that will bear a voyage through the tropics, and come into England at the one shilling duty. Would you not then regard the Cape Colony as a place, at least, worth thinking about and going to see?

This is exactly the problem which is in the course of solution, and on the success or failure of that solution there are vast interests depending. And here let me say a word in praise of one whom it may, I am afraid, fall to my task to blame—Sir Bartle Frere. Whatever may be said of Sir Bartle Frere's general policy, of one thing there can be no doubt. He took an immense amount of trouble while he was in South Africa to learn all about the country and its resources. There was no question relating to the prospects of the country about which he did not inform himself from the most competent authorities; and so long as his main line of policy is not involved, you may trust his information and his statements implicitly. This, you will say, is doubtful praise—something like the praise bestowed on Gilbert Glossin by Mr. Pleydell, when he said that Glossin was a

good lawyer enough if he didn't let a steek down on purpose. Be that as it may, the interest taken by Sir Bartle Frere in all matters affecting colonial progress and resources might serve as a valuable example to Imperial officials who, with far less ambitious designs, are far less disposed to make a study of the conditions of the country in which they are set down. Now this wine question is one the value of which Sir Bartle Frere immediately saw and specially went into. And if the Governor of a colony possessing responsible government can do nothing else, he can at least, by reason of his great social and personal influence, emphasise the importance of such undertakings as seem to him to be fitted to the conditions of the colony in which he is placed.

You want to see what can be done with South African wine? You will not see anything at present unless you take the trouble to visit a great airy shed not far from the Cape Town docks, where at this moment thousands of pounds worth of wine, belonging to a company supported by the capital of local merchants and wine growers, is waiting till it is fit to send to England. In making this wine the old rough and ready methods have been discarded, and a new method employed, under the supervision of an expert from Portugal. And the rough and ready wine has become—what? Look at it and see it as it is drawn from the huge casks—leaguers they call them here—and glows in the wine-glass. Where

did you ever see a wine so purely golden, so clear, so sparkling? Test it, and you will find it, too, well under the limit of the shilling duty. Pontac? No, it is not Pontac, which, as you know, is a dark red wine. Neither is it sherry, nor any other name that is known in the English market. It is a wine peculiar to itself, that will one day have a name of its own.

But not yet; leave it still to grow older and mellower before you challenge a verdict on this side of the equator.

CHAPTER V.

THE CAPE FARMER.

By this time you will have had almost enough of Cape Town, in every sense. Pretty as are its surroundings—at least on one side of it, to use an Hibernianism—it is not a place of which, in itself, you can get fond. It is not given to every one to live every day amid the sweet-scented fir-woods at Rondebosch, or the broad, bright vineyards of Constantia. And as for Cape Town itself, it is the oddest, most uncomfortable place you can be in. True, there is the broad shaded walk that runs between the grounds of Government House on the one side, and the Botanic Gardens on the other—at the foot of which, by the way, are being laid the foundations of a magnificent palace of Legislature, in which fondly imaginative minds already see a confederated parliament sitting. There is the drive round the "Kloof," with its magnificent views of sea and mountain; there is the Grey Library and the Museum; one with its really fine collection of rare works, presented by Sir George Grey; the other with a singularly rich

collection of singularly ugly South African insects, under the charge of a most courteous and talented curator. But then we cannot be for ever driving round the Kloof, or patrolling the broad walk by the gardens, or inspecting manuscripts or beetles, however old or ugly. And after this there is nothing.

For the truth must be told—Cape Town is itself the most dirty, unscavenged, ill-provided town in the British Empire. There is not a single street up which you can walk without danger of breaking your neck. If an Englishman's house is his castle, a Cape Dutchman's castle is his "stoep"—the space in front of his house, which in all Christian towns would be occupied by a foot-walk, but which he keeps, for his own private convenience, at any level and in any condition he pleases. Not even in Adderley Street, the street of big shops and big buildings, can you walk from one end to the other without turning on to the roadway. For a part of its length, it is true, an attempt has been made to provide walking accommodation. For twenty yards you go smoothly; then there is a step up, over which you trip; then, at a street corner, three steps up, climbing on to a high level crowded with casks and cases, which no pedestrian, if he loves his shins, attempts. As for the side streets, they are indescribable. One householder has his "stoep" railed round with a neat iron fence; another has it left unpro-

tected, with a precipice some four feet deep towards the lower end (for all side streets in Cape Town are on a slope). As for traffic regulation, there is none. A Malay waggon-driver threatens to crush you on one side, while a Hottentot cab-driver makes an airy shot at you on the other. And they that make it are like unto it. There is a corporation without authority; there are water-works without water; drains that carry away nothing; fire-engines without a fire brigade. And over all, for a third of the year at least, this eternal, dry, south-east wind blow, blow, blowing, till you wonder where on earth the stock of granite dust comes from.

There is one thing which Sir Bartle Frere did, soon after his arrival at Cape Town, for which I always feel grateful. He invited the Mayor and members of the Corporation to come and see him at Government House, and then and there gave them his mind roundly, and told them that the state of the town was simply a disgrace to them. Energetic and necessary, but scarcely in accordance with one's notions of gubernatorial fitness.

If you ask why things are so, I should say that it arises from the absence of a responsible lower class. The lower orders are, as you know by this time, mostly Malays, who, except on festive occasions, prefer the cheapness of dirt to the taxation of cleanliness.

You will not be sorry to leave here, whatever

your destination. But, before we go, we must take a trip across to the mainland—for Cape Town is, socially speaking, on an island—and see how people live there. We have an invitation, and a warm one, to go and stay with a Dutch family of farmers some thirty miles away; and the life of the Dutch farmer is a thing worth knowing something about.

Rail again, then, and here we are, staggering out of the station in the very teeth of a south-easter, that takes the spray from the crests of the waves as they break, and whirls it backward twenty yards out to sea again. Not the Wynberg line this time; we turn off sharp to the left at the junction you know of, and take the straight main line—as straight as rule can make it—across the Flats. The pace is not lively; the vehicles, being constructed for a 3½ feet gauge, are cramped. Imagine a "mixed" train on a branch of the Great Eastern line, taking it very easy, with a great deal of noise and commotion, and there you have it. Shut your eyes and listen to the rapid panting of the engine, and you think of the Irish mail; open them, and you feel disposed to get out and walk. But the poor thing's driving-wheels are only about three feet in diameter, so its fussiness may be pardoned; and you would find, too, if you went far enough to get to the steep grades up country, that this miniature locomotive can do its work marvellously well. And so on and on, across the sandy flats, some twelve weary miles without a

station, the only relief being to watch the cloud shadows moving about the mountain ranges that grow very slowly nearer on the right. These flats, as you know, were, in the old days of waggon travel, the great dread of all people who loved their cattle. The sand shifted and drifted into heaps wherever you least expected, and for a waggon to sink up to its axle was a common occurrence. There is a quaint story told of an up-country farmer, who, accustomed to the drifts and delays of the road, came to Cape Town for the first time by rail. He sat breathless and wonder-struck, clenching the seat with his hands, as the train went steadily on past the points which he recognised as well-known sticking places. At last the long stretch was nearly done, and the engine, as is natural with engines under such circumstances, whistled. Our friend the farmer, relaxing his hold of the edge of the seat, smiled grimly and shook his head. "Ah, you rascal," he said; "you can whistle now, but you daren't have whistled in the middle of the flats."

A station? Yes, positively a station, at which we draw up with the greatest possible tenderness, like a steam-hammer afraid of breaking an egg. This is D'Urban Road, a station much frequented by volunteer marksmen, who hold hereabouts their South African Wimbledon. There is a fearful excitement on the platform; a universal chatter of high-pitched Dutch; a rush on the part of male passengers for

refreshments. A long drawn stop, and then—then, surely we are off again. O dear, no! There is a great deal to be done yet! There are two trucks to be taken off, and three to be picked up, and other trucks whose position in the train has to be transposed. So we are first pulled forward a little way, and then pushed backward; then we are stopped with a bump that sends half of us flying off our seats; then started with a jerk that does the same with the other half. Twice we fondly imagine the performance has come to an end, and twice it begins again. At this rate, we think, we shall become so much inured to concussions of the spinal marrow that a good honest railway collision in England would not hurt us. But at last—yes, at last—we "really go," amid a waving of hands and a clattering of tongues that suggest a departure for the world's end at least. Truly the "spoorweg" is a great institution!

But we are at our destination now—at least so far as the "spoorweg" is concerned; and there, just outside this pretty country station, is a high Cape cart, with a pair of dashing-looking bays, waiting for us. The horses are uneasy, and Hendrik, our host's eldest, who has them in charge, asks us, after a hurried greeting, to be quick. So we stow ourselves as speedily as possible, and the horses spring away homewards with an eagerness that makes our young but self-possessed Jehu compress his lips and tighten

up his reins. Away forward, gently rising as the road, without a hedge or a tree, cuts its way through a green country, with here and there a square of sandy-looking ploughed land. The country, undulating gently, is open for miles round; here and there, in the distance, is a white house, which, after a little experience, you know to be a substantial homestead. Behind us, looking blue and distant, but with all its outlines as clear cut as ever, is Table Mountain, which we presently lose as we dip into a hollow and clatter through a farm. And now, with a motion of his whip and a nod of his head, Hendrik shows us, about a mile away, an unusual object in the bare landscape—a clump of trees. "Ours," he says, as he eases the horses over a watercourse, giving them their heads a little up the rise beyond. And in a few minutes, rounding the end of a barn-like looking building, with a clump of gum trees on the right, we dash up to the gate of the quaint little Dutch flower garden, and are conscious of a welcome waved from the stoep above it.

Passing through the gate and up towards the broad flight of steps to the stoep, we become aware that a Cape farmer's house is—a house. Solid, substantial, with the old-fashioned roof coming low down to make a deep shade over the stoep, which has at one end an aviary, where the children keep their pets; at the other a small room built out from the main body of the house, apparently as an after-

thought. Hendrik walks the horses round to the stables; while our hostess, so quiet and lady-like, and so young-looking to have that grown-up son and these grown-up daughters, greets us at the top of the steps. Our host is out on the farm, she explains; indeed, he seldom comes in till evening. But here are Bertha and Mary, all smiles, and some of the younger fry hanging shyly in the doorway behind. Bertha is fresh from a "finishing" school in Cape Town; Mary, her junior by a year, is still undergoing the process of being "finished;" but it is holiday time just now, so we have them both at home to greet us. Both are fair and fresh and substantial, as all good Dutch people are. Perhaps you would call Bertha, for a girl not seventeen, a shade too plump; but there is plenty of height, so what does it matter? Bertha's face is a continual smile; Mary's is a continual ripple of laughlets; there could hardly be a great contrast of expression between sisters so much alike. Mary you are at home with directly—I fancy she gets a gentle reining in occasionally from headquarters; Bertha is more silent. But that does not matter, for she has a mouth which, though provokingly small for a somewhat full outline of face, is perfectly irresistible. It is worth while to sit opposite her at the table, simply to see her look up and smile.

But the sun is getting low in the direction of Table Mountain,—you know where it is, though you

cannot see it,—and we turn, at the sound of a step behind us, to confront our host himself. A quiet—very quiet man, with fair hair and his youngest daughter's features; he, too, looking surprisingly young for such a burden of family responsibilities. He is roughly dressed, for he has been about the farm; and a Cape farmer is no drone, you may be sure. But a gentleman every inch—a gentleman in his quiet greeting, his question or two as to the journey, the very touch and grasp of his hand. A few minute's desultory talk, and you are conscious of a sort of general movement and stir. By some sort of instinct, born perhaps of an innate sense of punctuality, every one seems to know that it is supper-time—for supper at seven and dinner at twelve is the rule in these latitudes. And so we move in, finding ourselves in a room some thirty-five feet long and twenty feet wide, with a long and seriously laden table down the centre. There is a touch of home everywhere; the array of chairs waiting to be occupied; the whatnot, where the children keep their books; the sewing-machine in the window, where, at appointed times, the girls sit to overhaul rents in garments and holes in stockings.

And so we sit down; how many are we? Our hostess counts up, and says, "Seventeen;" adding, with a smile, "But we can easily do with more, and we always had rather have the table full than empty." A model hostess, surely! There is no

division of interests here—no attempt to conceal the fact that it is a really family circle round the table. Side by side our host and hostess sit at the head of the board; why not? They are joint chiefs over the household, and they know their responsibilities. Then come the guests—for there are other visitors besides ourselves; then the boys' tutor and the farm overseer; then the children, in strict order of merit, from Hendrik, and Bertha, and Mary, down to the last smallest importations from the nursery. There is a quiet cheerfulness over all the table; the children chatter Dutch together unrestrained, not that they do not all talk English fluently and naturally, but because Dutch comes most easily to their tongues. Occasionally our host, who confines himself mostly to English on our account, plunges into the warfare of Dutch voices, extricating himself again with a laugh and an apology, and perhaps a translation of the account of Mary's adventure with the lizard she thought was a snake, or of small Jan's tumble into the horsepond.

But the meal is over; the smaller people disappear; and we elders migrate into the drawing-room, a sister apartment to the one we have left. We catch, as we enter, that pleasant smell of varnished floors which haunts old rectory houses in rural English counties—a smell which seems to have a peculiar power of awaking pleasant associations. Our host is in his wonted easy chair, still sitting near our

hostess, with whom he interchanges, in a low tone, little scraps of information on the events of the day. There is the same look of home here as in the dining-room, with a shade more of luxury. The large windows cosily curtained; the centre table, with a few choice books; an ottoman, the result of our host's own carpentry and upholstery; a piano-forte and a harmonium to boot. There must be some music produced. Hendrik is accused of being a performer on the violin; but he is shy, and the matter is not pressed. Bertha has no great musical gift, but Mary has all the newest songs from England, and is no mean songstress. She sings in English, of course,—no one seems to take the trouble to write Dutch songs,—and you note that, good as her English is, there is still the Dutch accent. You would dislike it in some people; in Mary it sounds only piquant. "Poor," for instance, seems to have a tendency to contract itself into "poo'," while terminal "d's" become occasionally almost "t's." But what does it matter? You can laugh at Mary for her Dutch pronunciation, and she will laugh back again, and make a joke of her own little shortcomings.

And now our host makes a move, and that is a well understood signal to part company. It is scarce nine o'clock yet; but the master of the house, and Hendrik, and even the girls themselves, were up at half-past four this morning, and will be up at the

like hour again to-morrow. Do you understand now where the girls get their clear bright complexions?

It is pleasant to wake in the morning, with the sun stealing through the half-closed shutters and casting a light along the dark polished floor, while a gentle conversation between the fowls outside is the only sound, until, with the crack of a whip, and the shout of the driver, and the rattle of wheels and harness, the mule waggon comes swinging past your window on its way to some distant part of the farm. Then, as you are just about thoroughly roused, comes a knock at the door, and in comes the seven o'clock cup of coffee by the hands of a coloured servant—and such coffee! The day has begun long ago for the rest of the household. The girls were up nearly three hours back seeing after the farm labourers' breakfasts, and they are probably now snatching their own as they look after their father and the children. But you are a visitor, and for you there are special preparations, which you find when at your leisure—say about halfpast eight or nine—you drift into the big dining-room (there are no stairs or upper floors in these Dutch farmhouses). Here, as you enjoy your own breakfast, your hostess, who has had hers long ago, comes in to sit and talk, while the girls, in plain print dresses, with their sleeves tucked up, and perhaps with a duster in hand, come in and out on their household avocations. Presently they will go to make the bread

in the kitchen, kneading the dough in a trough as wide as you can stretch; while the black cook who keeps in attendance pops the finished loaves one after another into an oven big enough, you would say, to bake the whole family.

Dinner is at twelve, and you may if you like in the morning lounge round the farm and make discoveries. Here, in a range of buildings on one side, is the schoolroom, where the boys are at work with their tutor. In another range you find your host's sanctum, the tutor's apartments, and Hendrik's room too, where you may perhaps, by lying in ambush, catch him practising on that shy violin of his. Farther off are the cottages for the family retainers, where the small coloured children may be seen playing about, while their mothers, who are sure to have a bright-coloured handkerchief somewhere about them, sit lazily in the doorways. There are the yards for the horses and cattle; the pond, with its sloping side, where the cattle go down to drink; the big haystack, on and around which the children can play all day without a chance of hurting themselves. Then, after dinner, there is a lull in the house, while every one disappears for an hour's siesta. Then the pleasant afternoon life follows. There has been a picnic arranged, with a long ride in the mule-waggon to reach the chosen camping ground. Or there are calls to be paid at neighbouring farmhouses, where the ladies

talk Dutch cosily together. Or Cape carts will roll up to the door bringing visitors, who will exchange a few words and pass on, or get down to extend their chat in our hostess's drawing-room.

And so the quiet patriarchal life goes on, not in one homestead, nor in ten, nor in a hundred, but in thousands all over this Western Province. Sometimes there is less refinement, sometimes more, but ever the same unpretentious life, the same coupling of the most ordinary household or agricultural pursuits with a sterling self-respect, and a regard for whatever higher culture comes in the way. There is no sham about it all, no parading of simple habits, no disguising of comfort and of wealth. Bertha and Mary, with their print dresses on and their sleeves turned up, are not self-conscious "lady-helps;" nor are they, when in the drawing-room, servant girls boasting a thin varnish of accomplishments. Those who move in this life are all sincere to it. It is part of them; they cannot see in it any particular drawbacks or any particular advantages. It is their life, and they live it. And what can men or women do more? The land is our host's own; he pays no rent to a feudal lord; he is utterly regardless of that doctrine of a triple interest which the author of *Endymion* laid down as indispensable to the right understanding of all landed questions. His father worked the farm before him; his son will work it after him. It is a family property, in which all the family have an in-

terest, and the possession of which is regarded more as a responsibility than as a privilege. There is no entailing or encumbering of estates in this part of the world—no waiting for dead men's shoes. For—and this is the point which will strike you as strangest—our host's parents are still living, occupying an unpretentious little cottage on the farm, visited and honoured by their children and grandchildren, living the quaintest, pleasantest, most contented Darby and Joan life you can possibly picture. They have had their share of the work of the world, and they have retired, to rest contentedly and to see those who come after them enjoying the results of their care and forethought. In time our host and hostess, too, will give up the farm to their son, and themselves retire, still loving and beloved by all who now crowd round their table, watching the younger lives growing up without a thought of envy, or jealousy, or even regret. And then for them, too, at last, there will come one day a deeper, more solemn sunset than that which looks at us here from far away by Table Mountain; and like faded leaves they will quietly sink down to their rest, enriching by their memories the life out of which they have sprung.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DUTCH GRIEVANCE.

IT is time for us now to be leaving the Western Province, and taking a look eastward. Port Elizabeth, the "Liverpool of South Africa," is the next point we have to aim at. And how to get there? By land or by sea? By road or by rail? One day soon, no doubt, you will be able to get to Port Elizabeth from Cape Town by rail. Already the line from Cape Town runs eastward as far as Beaufort West, a distance of 338 miles; while to Graaff Reynet, which is some 150 miles east again of Beaufort West, there is a line already open from Port Elizabeth. But, in the meantime, this gap of 150 miles is unbridged by railway, and is not a pleasant one to traverse by road. The mail-cart comes that way, it is true; but then mail-carts, as you will perhaps presently find out, are in South Africa curious and amphibious things, not to be travelled in without much inconvenience and some risk.

By sea, then, it must be; and so, seeking the docks once more, we place ourselves on board one of

the handy little steamers which our good friend Mr. Donald Currie has specially built to keep up the communication along the coast. There is, observe, no absolute necessity to give up the dignity of the ocean steamer for the comparative confinement of the coaster. The ocean steamer will always carry you between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, which is the terminal point of her voyage. Variety, however, is charming, and the man who has been seasoned in the Bay of Biscay on the passage out ought not to mind a little knocking about round Cape Agulhas.

A little knocking about! Of course no one minds anything in moderation; but nevertheless the fact must not be lost sight of that this voyage, round from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth, and thence to Natal, is often one of the most dangerous and roughest conceivable. Here, off Cape Point,—the Cape of Storms that bothered old Vasco de Gama so horribly,—you are at the meeting of two oceans, the Indian and the South Atlantic. The westerly swell that sets in here from the Atlantic has a clear run of some 3000 miles from the South American coast; the south-easterly swell of the Indian Ocean gets a start from no one quite knows where; while, to make matters worse, the Agulhas Bank plays that uncomfortable trick with the ocean rollers which such shoals always play —doubles them up short, and turns a long, smooth, gentlemanlike sort of sea into a sea of all sorts of shapes and angles, that stands perpendicularly above

you, and tumbles down on the top of you, while all you can do is to keep your machinery going dead slow, and hope that nothing will give way in the engine-room. Nor is this all. To make matters worse still, your compasses all along this coast are subject to all sorts of odd variations, necessitating constant attention and comparison.

After this, it will not surprise you to learn that the skipper of a South African coasting steamer seldom takes off his clothes while under way round the coast, and that wrecks of mail and other steamers are not uncommon. It is worth while to see how a north-wester *can* blow round the Cape, if only for the recollection of the experience. But the experience is not always, even in a big vessel, a pleasant one. It is not in every way pleasant to steam for two nights and a day before a wind that fills every hollow between the waves with a white mist of spray, with the engines working as if for dear life, with the saloon half drowned out, and a big sea curling every few minutes over the taffrail; and all the while conscious of a vague sort of doubt whether your floating home—a long, narrow, lengthened vessel, hastily chartered to fill up a gap in the regular service—may not, with her bows plunged deep into one sea and her stern into another, think it convenient to break in two amidships.

But we will waive unpleasantnesses for the moment, and suppose that everything is tolerably propitious.

We will suppose that we have got safe out of the Cape Town docks, round the end of the breakwater, past the lighthouse we saw when we steamed in from our ocean voyage; past the entrance to Hout's Bay, the veritable landlocked bay that lies just beyond the Constantia vineyards; past the Albatross Rock, to which, mindful of the fate that has befallen navigators in not very distant days, we give a wide berth. And now, rounding the black precipices of Cape Point at a safe distance of two or three miles, we can shape our course south-eastward, crossing the wide entrance of False Bay, out of which, as you know, opens on the western side the important naval station of Simon's Bay, with the town of that ilk. The range of the Hottentot Holland Mountains stands out high on our port side, a little forward of the beam, and our skipper seems to have no great fancy for shaving the land very close. And is he not right? There is hardly a more fatal corner on the South African coast than that over-shadowed by the end of that mountain range. There the ill-fated steamer *Birkenhead* was wrecked in 1852, when conveying reinforcements to the Kafir war,—you know the story, how the soldiers kept their ranks on the deck until the ship broke in two and went down? There, too, the troopship *Clyde* was wrecked in 1879, when taking out stores and troops for the Zulu campaign, not a life, luckily, being lost. There, too, at an intermediate date, the Union Company's steamer

Celt was lost—you can still, if you venture near enough, see some part of her hull and her boilers above the line of breakers. They call that corner Danger Point,—surely a name that has a meaning.

But we need not compile an itinerary, more especially as by nightfall it might all be compressed into two sentences:—"At this point, on the left, is the continent of Africa; on the right is the Antarctic Pole." We look in at Mossel Bay in the morning, just dropping anchor for a couple of hours to bundle some bales into a lump of a cargo boat that comes tossing alongside from a small collection of gray houses on a desolate shore. Then off eastward again, past the Knysna mouth, round which, in magnificent forests, elephants and buffaloes, preserved by a paternal government, still roam at large; past the flashing light on Cape St. Francis, that looks pale in the early dawn, and in sight of distant mountain ridges with the oddest outlines in the world. A low, desolate coast, it seems near at hand, with the white surf running far up a bright sandy beach, crowned with a brown expanse of turf. Presently another lighthouse, of the stumpy columnar order, is sighted on the port bow, and as we round it—Algoa Bay, and the good town of Port Elizabeth, looking hot and white in the distance, with its wharves and warehouses seen between the gray hulls of steamers and the black hulls of sailing vessels that swing at their anchors in the roadstead.

A roadstead merely, not a harbour, and surely one of the oddest roadsteads in the world. There is talk of one day building a breakwater out in the middle of the bay, with loading berths behind it, and a bridge to link it with the shore. But in the meantime a roadstead only, with a good holding ground, it is true, but otherwise a veritable *statio malefida carinis.* True, it is sheltered from the west, and though the off-shore wind blows hard enough at times to cover a ship's deck with sand from one end to the other, still the wave disturbance is little more than a ripple. But when the south-easter sets in,—when the big mail steamers with two anchors down and steam up can barely hold their own; when it is only in a lifeboat, and at imminent risk, that communication can be kept up with the beach; when ships, with half their crews on shore, slip their cables and scuttle out to sea as best they can to keep out of harm's way,—then it is a very different matter. Algoa Bay is not at such times a lively place to be at anchor in, while as to danger—look at the melancholy remnants of wrecks strewn round the shore. That such a place as this should be the chief commercial port of South Africa surely speaks strongly of the general lack of harbour accommodation.

The pulse of trade here beats quick, however, that is clear. These red-sailed, flat-bottomed cargo boats, that hold their wind with such obstinate pertinacity—don't leave a boat towing astern while at

anchor off Port Elizabeth, unless you want her to be smashed to splinters—and that budge out of the way for nobody, are in incessant motion, and the amount of cargo they can stow away under their half decks is calculated to astonish the stranger. These dark skinned, muscular fellows who handle them are Malays, mostly—men who will brook no interference with their rights, who take judicious toll of your goods as they carry them ashore, and who are more handy with their knives in a quarrel than is pleasant. Ashore there is the same bustle as on the water. The business part of the town, it is true, with its massive buildings of yellow stone, is compressed into a somewhat narrow compass; for the ground rises, almost at once, as steeply as a Tyneside street; and above, visible from the sea, but not from the wharves, lie the trim white villas of the Port Elizabeth plutocracy. Villas—yes, and a club; the trimmest, snuggest, most hospitable club—so its members aver—in South Africa, with a broad verandah round two sides of a green garden, and a view over house-tops and shipping and blue ocean, to where the faint white clouds hang over a clear-cut far-distant horizon. And if you haven't learnt before that brandy-and-soda is the national drink of South Africa, you will learn it here at any rate.

All this town, its trade, its warehouses, its railways that penetrate to Grahamstown to the north-east, to Cradock to the north, to Graaf Reynet

towards the north-west, is purely of English manufacture. Acknowledge the fact freely and fully, and take off your hat to the enterprise that, unassisted by a single farthing from the Imperial Treasury, has established this firm civilisation in the midst of what was, fifty years ago, almost a peopleless waste. Port Elizabeth is the capital, and a worthy one, of the Eastern Province, and the Eastern Province is the great English stronghold. If you want to know all about the Eastern Province, read any South African handbook that is published in England, for you will find ten words given to this part of the Cape Colony to every one that is devoted to the Western Province. This is natural under the circumstances, and perfectly excusable. Englishmen take a pride in English enterprise, and glorify each other for their success in all corners of the globe. Quite right; let us grant every word that is said, and then — let us look a little deeper. You will wonder why, perhaps, I should have brought this bit of purely English scenery into a chapter on the Dutch grievance. The answer to this is simple. It is because in this Eastern Province the Dutch grievance has its root, and unless, by understanding the history of affairs in this Eastern Province, you get to understand the real nature of the Dutch grievance, South African difficulties will for ever remain to you a sealed book. Once, bear in mind, this Eastern Province, except for the fact that it was

pastoral instead of agricultural, was as Dutch as the Western; and, but for certain important events that happened a little less than fifty years ago, might have remained so. That it did not remain so—that its Dutch occupiers were driven out to carry the torch of civilisation farther inland, leaving their place to be filled up by a strong and growing British element, was an advantage and a blessing to South Africa at large. But do not forget that what is a blessing to a country at large may be a deep source of grievance and injury to one section of its inhabitants; do not forget that the advantage of this spread of population cannot be reaped, that South Africa, within its present extended limits, cannot be made united, progressive, self-governing, and self-defending, unless the now organic and inherited grievance of of those who form the most solid part of its population is allowed for, considered, and, as far as possible, rectified.

What is the Dutch grievance?

There is an answer ready made, which will be put into your mouth at once. You will be told, on the authority of a number of well-meaning and influential people who have seats in Parliament, and luxurious offices in the city, and who keep up a certain active organisation that has its headquarters up three pair of stairs near Charing Cross,—you will be told by these well-meaning people that the Dutch grievance against British Government in

South Africa lies in this—that the Dutch are by nature slave-owners and oppressors of the native races, and that they hate the British Government, and have always striven to escape from its jurisdiction, because the British Government has been the consistent enemy of slavery, and protector of the coloured races.

Now this is a belief so important, exercising at this moment, as it has done for half a century, such a pernicious effect upon the prospects of peace and progress in South Africa, that plain speaking is absolutely necessary. And, therefore, I trust you will not be shocked when I tell you in as few words as possible that this statement is a falsehood.

It is a falsehood, and a most dangerous falsehood, for two reasons. In the first place, it is dangerous because it is a falsehood for which no one person can be now made responsible—for you do not suppose that I mean to imply that those who now make it their business to force it on your attention give countenance to what they believe to be untrue; they are themselves deceived on the subject, though perhaps it would have been better if they had taken the trouble to hear the other side of the question before they branded a whole people with infamy. This is one reason why it is dangerous. The other reason is because it is a falsehood of old standing—a fifty years' lie, which cannot, therefore, be met with simple contradiction, but which has to be rooted up, ex-

ploded, blown out of the ground of British memory and imagination.

I wish to state this conviction—this fact—in as few and as plain words as possible. And, lest any mistake should be made, I must, even at the risk of incurring the charge of egotism, allude to my own position in regard to this question. Lest you should think this is merely the view of one utterly careless of native rights and interests, I may tell you that when, during the miserable months of the Zulu war, the war fever was at its highest, when the popular voice in Natal was demanding nothing less than Zulu extermination, I incurred abuse, social isolation, the risk of personal violence and of loss of income, for pleading week after week for some show of that moderation and just dealing which seemed to me to be national characteristics of some worth. You need not take my word for this. You may ask every journalist in South Africa, every special correspondent who represented the London press, every colonist in Natal, every officer who was present with the Imperial forces; you may ask, if you think it worth while, Sir Bartle Frere himself, who, I think, will at least credit me with a sincere intention to make him uncomfortable and unhappy.

One word more. The well-meaning persons to whom I have alluded may or may not take the trouble to controvert what I have said. There is only one answer to them in case they should

do so. Let them employ their influence in Parliament to procure the appointment of an unprejudiced Royal Commission, in which the Dutch element shall be fairly represented by such men as you can find in the person of Sir Henry de Villiers, the Chief-Justice of the Cape Colony; in his brother Amelius de Villiers, the Chief-Justice of the Free State; in Mr. Kotze, the wrongfully superseded Chief-Justice of the Transvaal; in which the English colonial element shall be represented by Sir Henry Connor, the Chief-Justice of Natal; by Dr. Colenso; by such representative colonists as Mr. Saul Solomon, of Cape Town; Mr. Walter Macfarlane, the late, or Mr. J. W. Akerman, the present Speaker of the Natal Legislative Council,—let the friends of the native in South Africa, I repeat, clamour for such a Commission as this, and be content to abide by the result of its inquiries, and they will not only be largely contributing to the peace and prosperity of South Africa, but to the welfare of the native himself. But as long as they decline to do this—so long, that is to say, as they deny to the Transvaal Boers, who are their special enemies at this moment, the open inquiry which the Transvaal Boers have over and over again demanded, not a single word of the slander which they level at the heads of a brave and high-spirited people has the faintest claim to be heard.

No, the Dutch grievance is not the slave-owner's grievance; the Dutch retreat from British rule was

not caused by the desire to carry slave-owning institutions into regions beyond the reach of British jurisdiction. Grant that wrongs have been committed upon natives by both English settlers and by Dutch,—and it would be difficult to imagine any wrongs inflicted by Dutchmen greater than the Zulu war, the treatment of the Griquas on the borders of Natal, or the filching of the mouth of the St. John's river from the Pondo chief Umquikela,—grant that such wrongs have been committed in the past and must be guarded against in the future; but do not, if you have any care for South African interests at all, march away with the idea that where Dutchmen are supreme native interests suffer, and that wherever the British flag flies native interests are protected. Ask those who know,—instruct your Royal Commission to inquire as to what goes on, for example, in that intensely British community, as it regards itself, at the Diamond Fields,—and they will soon make you understand why a native, almost everywhere in South Africa, will serve a Dutchman better, and for less wages, than he will serve an Englishman. It is true that the Dutch colonist—and I speak now of things as they are in Natal—will chastise his servant, without reference to a magistrate, for neglect of duty. But it is equally true that the English colonist, whose conscience may be tender with regard to the rights of the powers that be, chafes because the magistrate persists in

awarding fine or imprisonment instead of personal correction. And it is also true—shockingly true, if you will—that while the chastised servant of the Dutch master will rub his back and go about his work without a thought of ill-will, the fined servant of the English master will run off to his kraal for a week's holiday, leaving his employer in the lurch, or go to some speculating law-agent to trump up a charge of ill-usage.

The Dutch grievance has been simply the grievance which might naturally be expected to arise when a government, military in its spirit, if not actually military in its *personnel*, exercises sway over a people alien in nationality, in language, in ideas, in everything. Go back fifty years or so, and put yourself in the position of the despotic British Governor at Cape Town, and then in the position of the conquered Dutch farmers scattered over the Cape Colony. Could any gulf be imagined wider than that between Governor and governed? It was not part of the serious business of the Governor at Cape Town to understand the feelings and wishes of Dutch farmers. What he had to do was to hold the Cape as a naval and military station against all comers, and to take care, as we shall see presently, that no other European power got a foothold anywhere on the South African continent. If the British Governor encouraged the making of a road, it was with a military object; if he interfered with the Dutch

farmer's employment of natives, it was that he might use them himself. Do you know what Sir John Cradock, who was then Governor at Cape Town, did in 1812? He issued a proclamation empowering the landdrost—that is, the magistrate—in every district to seize Hottentot children of eight years old, whose parents had been in his service, and apprentice them for ten years to whomsoever he pleased. That was done, some people will tell you, to please the Dutch, and to purchase a certain amount of Dutch support for the British Government, just as, in order to please the Dutch of the Transvaal, Sir Bartle Frere levied war on the Zulus. Sir John Cradock, however, failed to please the Dutch, just as Sir Bartle Frere failed to please them; while the morality of the two actions was about on a par.

Do you know what was the custom of Cape Governors as late as the years immediately preceding the abolition of slavery? I will quote from the pages of an essentially English work on South Africa—a work in which everything that can exalt the English colonist and prejudice the Dutch is given the utmost prominence.

"They (the Hottentots) were in a condition of virtual slavery, without, however, any of the corresponding obligations which actual ownership entails on the part of the master. The Colonial Government claimed and exercised the right of forcibly enlisting them into the Cape regiments, or compelling them to do any public work at the most trifling remuneration. Those not in Government employ were, by

virtue of Lord Caledon's proclamation, . . . at the mercy of the magistrates and the farmers. True, in case of ill-treatment, the law provided for an appeal to the neighbouring magistrate. But if his master refused a pass, it was scarcely possible for the complainant to reach the magistrate's residence without being arrested on the way, and punished as a vagabond. If he escaped this peril, and reached the magistrate's office, he would be lodged in the common prison with felons for one, two, three weeks, or more, till that official was at leisure to investigate the charge. Then, if he failed to substantiate the charge, or if the ill-treatment, though proved, did not seem bad enough to the magistrate to warrant inflicting a punishment on the master, the poor Hottentot was severely flogged."

This evidence, which I quote from page 39 of the last edition of Silver's *Handbook to South Africa*, is pretty conclusive with regard to the manner in which British Governors, previous to the abolition of slavery, protected native interests. Can you wonder that, when a pinch arose, the Hottentots sided with their Dutch owners rather than with their British protectors?

Such a pinch arose—to retrace our steps for a moment—in 1815; whether it would have arisen but for the presence of a special element of mischief, an element still existing and powerful in South Africa, is doubtful. Sixty years ago, as to-day, there were people in South Africa who saw in the stirring up of quarrels between British officials and Dutch farmers a means of bettering themselves. Lately there were dozens of English adventurers fighting

valiantly on the side of the British troops in Pretoria because they expected to profit by speculating in the Dutch farms that would, as they believed, be confiscated and thrown on the market when the war was at an end. Sixty years ago there were those who, in the Cape Colony, stirred up bad blood between Governor and governed for very similar purposes. A crusade was preached against the Dutch farmers. Circuit Courts were opened, at which monstrous charges of cruelty to native servants were levelled at the most respected Dutch families—charges in almost every case, though at the expense of the accused persons, disproved. At last, in one of the eastern districts, a farmer named Bezuidenhout, who was summoned to appear before the Circuit Court on a charge of ill-treating a Hottentot, refused to comply. A force of soldiers was sent to arrest him, their employment on such duty being totally illegal. Bezuidenhout resisted—fired upon the advancing party—and, accompanied by a faithful Hottentot servant, fled and took refuge in a cave. Here he was pursued, surrounded, fired upon, mortally wounded; his faithful Hottentot—what a pity that no one with a sense of irony has taken the trouble to stamp on the corner of a sheet of letter-paper a picture of this Hottentot slave risking his life to screen his Dutch master from British authority!—surrendered. Then followed resentment and insurrection; battles among the mountains, in which the Dutch insurgents were

dispersed and taken prisoners. Thirty-nine were tried for high treason; five were condemned to death. The execution, which took place at a spot known as Slaghter's Nek, in the presence—so the sentence ran—of the relatives and friends of the sufferers, was an awful one. The gallows broke down with the weight of the five men, who fell to the ground scarcely injured. Crawling up to the feet of the British officer in charge, they implored mercy. Their relatives, pressing in among the troops, joined in the cry. But British justice was inexorable. The scaffold was reconstructed; the five men were hanged separately, instead of together; and their bodies, denied to the prayers of their friends, were buried at the foot of the gallows.

Put yourself, I repeat, in the place of these Dutchmen—put yourself in the place of their descendants, who to this day are burghers of the Transvaal, and endeavour to realise their feelings towards the British flag. Put yourself, too, in the place of the English historian of to-day, and judge whether he has not reason for passing over lightly such an episode as this.

But the Cape Boers were slaveowners, were they not? Certainly they were, just as your West Indian planters were slaveowners—just as British subjects in all parts of the globe were slaveowners, until the national conscience woke up, and the abomination was kicked overboard. Let this be admitted, though

it might, if it were necessary, be shown that the Dutch system of slavery was far more humane and patriarchal than any existing at the time elsewhere. The Dutch farmers were slaveowners, and especially those in the Western Province, where society was more advanced, and where the greater prevalence of agricultural pursuits rendered slave labour more necessary. But, slaveowner as he was, the Dutch farmer had a deep respect, as he has to this day, for the principles of law and order. Under the Roman-Dutch code, which he brought with him from Holland, and which is still in force all over South Africa, the State is granted the right of interfering with private property and interests for public ends, so long as private interests do not unreasonably suffer. When, therefore, the proposal for the emancipation of their slaves, accompanied by the promise of compensation, reached the Cape farmers, they raised no objection whatever. A Government valuation was made, and the amount requisite to provide them with adequate compensation was set down at £3,000,000. When, however, the amount had to be paid, only £1,200,000 was forthcoming, as the proportion to be paid by the British nation to the South African slaveowners. Nor was this all; the reduced amounts were, in the following of some red-tape maxim or other, made payable in London. The farmers, unskilled in business arrangements, were victimised right and left by speculators, who, having first depreciated the value of

the Treasury promises to pay by the diligent circulation of false reports, bought them up at an enormous discount, and, of course, made an enormous profit. In all cases the farmers saw themselves suddenly deprived of a most valuable part of their property. In many cases banks which had made advances on the security of slave property were compelled, in self-defence, to foreclose their mortgages. There was little but financial ruin from one end of the Colony to the other.

This blow was felt in the Eastern Province as well as in the Western, though it was felt in the Western Province most severely. Two or three years afterwards occurred the great exodus of Boers from the Cape Colony into the Free State and Natal. This exodus, however, was from the Eastern, and not from the Western Province. Yet it was, as we have seen, the Western Province that had most reason to complain. Why was there, then, no exodus from the Western Province?

Because the slave question was not the question which formed the main ground of contention between the Cape farmers and the British Government: because the assertion that the Boers migrated in order to be free to carry on their slave-owning propensities, is, as I have characterised it, a falsehood.

There was disappointment and bitterness, as may be well imagined; but this was not by reason of the abolition of an institution to which the farmers were

attached, but by reason of the bad faith kept by the British Government in the matter of compensation. It was later, in 1835, that Dutch grievances reached a climax. In that year the representatives of British authority—still absolute as ever, and still as mischievous, as ignorant, and as meddling as they proved on many occasions both before and since,—plunged the eastern frontier into war, which commenced with a dire destruction of life and property. In one week at the close of 1834—for the war began in that year—forty farmers were murdered, 450 farmhouses burnt, 4000 horses, 100,000 head of cattle, and 150,000 sheep, carried off. The British settlers, who had been brought into the colony some fifteen years before, fared no better than the Dutch. Driven from their wrecked homes, they were received at Algoa Bay, helpless and homeless, as poor as when they were landed there.

Nine months of fighting followed; European firmness and discipline were too much, as they have always been, for the incoherent and wavering impulse of the native hordes. Peace was re-established; an indemnity was paid by the native chiefs who had taken part in the conflict; and British sovereignty was accepted by all the tribes to the west of the Kei River, which still forms the eastern boundary of the Cape Colony proper. And then, by a stroke of the pen of Lord Glenelg, who was then Secretary of State, the whole results of the struggle were reversed,

and both settlers and Government included in one sweeping censure. That the Cape Government, whose mischievous and capricious policy had produced the war, deserved censure, may be admitted; that the settlers, who had suffered so enormously, deserved it, must ever be denied.

Put yourself in the place of these Dutch farmers, slandered as they had been, and (in their own view) defrauded by the Imperial Government; put yourself in their place as they came out of this war, with the loss of homes, of stock, of friends and relatives, and were told that their acts of self-defence were unjustifiable, that the natives—the warlike Amaxosa—who had burnt their homesteads and driven off their flocks and herds, were in the right, and that they themselves were in the wrong,—put yourself in their place, and ask whether or not the moment had not come when longer endurance was impossible?

CHAPTER VII.

THE DUTCH EXODUS.

"No," they said; "it is too much. We have endured this Government long enough; but we can endure it no longer. We have endeavoured, having once accepted it, to be loyal towards it, and have done our best to understand what it wants of us. We have, at its bidding, given up our slaves, and found ourselves pecuniarily ruined; we have, with its approval, fought for our lives against ruthless marauders, and find ourselves blamed and slandered; we find the peace we have so dearly purchased thrown away, and the Kafir, whom we chased yesterday far within his own boundary, encouraged to plunder our farms and molest our homesteads; we find that whoever, no matter for what reason of revenge or covetousness, has a bad word to breathe into the ears of British Governors against us Dutch folk, is listened to without question; while to us even a request to be heard is denied. We have borne much, and we can bear no more. We must go—that is, if this British Government will let us. We will go to the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Andries Stockenstrom,

who, though a servant of the British Crown, is yet one of ourselves, and ask him for leave to depart. We will meet him at Uitenhage, and he will tell us—will he not?—that there is neither legal nor political impediment in the way of our proposed removal. Very well, then; the die is cast, and we will go. Inspan the oxen, Piet and Hendrik; put the little ones in the waggon; drive on the flocks before us. Read the last verse out of the well-worn Bible; sing the last hymn round the table by which we have gathered so long. Leave the hearth empty, and the door open; it has never been closed in the face of a stranger, and need not be closed now. Our farms?—let them go; the British land speculator will come in, and, giving us a mere handful, will reap a bushel of profit for himself. We care not, for our hearts as well as our goods are going with us, and our memory will be blotted out. There is danger before us, we know; the treacherous and pitiless savage; the wild beast—the lion and the hyena; the flood that overwhelms, the lightning that blasts; murrain for our cattle, hunger, it may be, for ourselves. There is danger before us, but there is at least freedom. We shall have our own arm to rely upon—our own arm, and the Hand that both guides us and protects. Wife, sons, children,—a last look at the old home, and we are gone. We go forth, not knowing whither; but we go forth in faith, doubting not that the Lord will provide."

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Northward, yes!—that must be our first thought. Northward through the passes of the Stormberg—northward till we reach the banks of that great Orange River, beyond which, on the wide plains we have heard of, we may surely hope to have peace. Northward, scattering, by God's help, and in pitched battle, the forces of the great chief Moselikatze, who comes against us; northward, settling down here and there, as the chance falls out, until we begin to people the land. What! further yet? It is Piet Retief—bold leader that he has been—who, with a band like minded with himself, has explored that pass, turning to the southward through the giant Drakensberg, and who has from its farther end looked down on the fair plains of Natal, as Spanish adventurers once looked down from a peak in Darien upon the blue Pacific. Their waggons have passed through; their flocks; their families. A hazardous enterprise, surely; for all that plain, now lying waste, is a portion of the conquests of the Zulu king, Chaka, whose son Dingaan holds, it is said, bloody court near the Tugela. Hazardous, too, in another respect; for it is whispered that a little settlement of Englishmen are already on the coast. The English visitors, however, take no notice of us, while the Zulu king is more than friendly. He invites us to visit him; he offers us a cession of the territory which is his by undoubted conquest. Leaving our camps unprotected, we accept the invitation. All is friendly,

peaceful, good-humoured. A deed of cession is drawn up, to which the Zulu king affixes his royal mark; and our careful Retief, his day's business done, rolls up the document and places it in the bandolier over his shoulder. What does the black monarch ask of us? One more act of friendly fraternisation. Lay aside your arms, he says, and drink with me in the midst of my unarmed warriors. A suspicious request surely; but our careful Retief is noble-minded and repels the suspicion. He gives us the order, and we obey it; our arms are laid aside; we enter the royal circle. And then the countenance of the chief changes; with a single shout, whose fatal meaning we just have time to gather, he springs to his feet. The dusky unarmed regiments rush upon us from behind. Unarmed? No, for in every man's hand is that short stabbing assegai which forty years hence the British soldier shall learn to dread. Retief is down, stabbed in a dozen places at once; one by one —unarmed, yet resisting—we fall over him, praying with our last breath for those helpless ones left in the camp by the Bushman's river.

Ah! we might well pray; yet no—for prayer would be in vain. The Zulu's treachery has been complete, and even while we are still struggling, another band of exterminators is stealing upon that camp—upon the wives washing their garments in the river, the little children playing round the waggon wheels, the few men smoking their pipes and clean-

ing their guns as they sit on the waggon-chest. Warning there is none; the black destroying cloud is in the camp as soon as seen; resistance is unavailing, for there are none to resist. Surely the children, as they huddle together under the waggons, will be spared? Surely the dogs, that bark loudly, and then cower in the nearest place of shelter, will escape? No; the Zulu, sent out on a mission of extermination, spares nothing. The weapon that transfixes the child is plunged in another instant into the dog; nothing must be left alive. Make certain, were the orders of the chief, make certain that the wizards—these men who would juggle me out of my lawful dominions by the mark of a pen on a piece of parchment—are killed. Well might they give to that camp the name of "Weenen," or weeping, for in that massacre there was not a family that did not lose some of its best and dearest.

But is the Dutch emigration to be entirely exterminated? How fares it with that other camp under command of the brave Pretorius? He has had warning, thank God,—short warning, it is true, but still warning sufficient for the occasion. The waggons are hastily laagered, locked together in that almost impenetrable circle which, had some one only had the forethought, would have saved hundreds of British lives on a field still freshly remembered. The Zulus rush on, confident of victory. They press round the laager on every side; but they cannot

break through. The guns of the Dutchmen are at work, and the assailants fall thickly. And see! the brave Pretorius has got a gun—a queer shaped three-pounder, but a gun all the same—mounted on the front of a waggon, from whence, charged with whatever comes handiest, it flashes out wholesale slaughter. The Zulu warriors waver—hesitate—retire, leaving their dead on the ground, and a solemn sense of victory with the defenders of the laager. There were sad and anxious times for a while, and then came victory and revenge. For in the pitched battle by the Bloed river, on the 16th December 1838—"Dingaan's Day," as it has been called ever since—the Zulu hosts were routed, Dingaan fleeing only to perish by the same kind of treachery as he had himself practised. And then it was, and only then, that, visiting the scene of the first massacre, the remains of Retief were found, with the deed of cession still safe in the receptacle in which he had placed it a short half-hour before he fell a victim to the hidden assegais of the Zulu braves.

The story reads like a tale of New England settlement of the seventeenth century. Yet it is little more than forty years since the pilgrim fathers of Natal—for surely they were such—brought their waggons down the steep slopes of the Drakensberg. Only the other day, a survivor from that Weenen massacre—one who was a child at the time, and who was found two days afterwards, still living, with

nineteen assegai wounds in her body—died in Pietermaritzburg. Only the other day, old Solomon Maritz, brother of the very same Gert Maritz who came with Retief over the Drakensberg, died on his farm in Natal. Forty years is not a long time to look back upon stirring events, and the Dutchman's memory is no short one. It may, therefore, be guessed that he has not, in Natal, lost sight of the importance of his own efforts at early settlement. That he is right to regard them as of importance is clear; for it was owing to that defeat of the Zulus on "Dingaan's Day" that Natal only became colonisable.

But the emigrant Boers in Natal had other foes to deal with besides the Zulus. The report of their doings had reached Cape Town, and, in the following of the old exclusive policy with regard to South Africa, it was deemed necessary to assert authority over them, notwithstanding the fact that they had had full liberty to leave the Cape Colony and seek their fortune where they pleased. Under the military *régime* then prevailing at Cape Town, it was only a step from a suggestion to a proclamation. The proclamation was, to say the least, a strong one; and so the emigrant Boers of Natal must have thought, when, returning from their hardly won victory over the Zulus, they found it thrust in their faces, so to speak, by an officer in charge of a small body of British infantry which had arrived from Cape Town. For this

officer was empowered to search for, seize, and destroy all arms and munitions of war found in possession of any person in the districts around Port Natal.

A task more easily set than fulfilled, it is clear; and, as a matter-of-fact, the officer in charge of the party, who was a man of common sense and humanity, never attempted to fulfil it. He recognised the fact that the Boers were *de facto* in possession of the country, and that they had to hold their ground in the presence of savage enemies who might again disturb them. The two parties—Dutch Boers and British troops—quietly ignored each other's existence, and in the course of time the latter were withdrawn. British sovereignty in Natal, in fact, was virtually abandoned; a letter was forwarded to the Dutch leaders from the Cape Governor, then Sir George Napier, wishing them success in their new enterprise; and the few British residents in the place made up their minds that the country was to be Dutch, and independent.

A year or two later there was a change. A reprisal carried out against some native cattle-stealers by the Boer Government of Natal gave the Cape Government an excuse to reassert an authority about the abandonment of which it had always felt uneasy. A small force of infantry and artillery was sent to Durban overland from the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony. Its commander, possessed of that

easy self-confidence that has more than once led British generals in South Africa into disaster, was encountered a mile or two from Durban, at a spot known as Congella, and completely defeated, mainly owing, curiously enough, to the superior tactics of a Dutch field-cornet named Joubert. Hastily retiring within a rough intrenchment, the British force had to wait to be starved out or to be relieved. To make matters worse, the Boers, by an admirable piece of strategy, seized upon the stores that had been sent round by sea for the use of the British troops, including one or two guns, which they turned against their rightful owners. Things were getting desperate, when a frigate with reinforcements appeared off the port. An English resident of Durban had, when the siege began, swum across the mouth of the harbour, and, taking horse on the southern side, ridden alone through hundreds of miles of the wildest country, arriving at Grahamstown in nine days, with the news of the British defeat and peril—a performance still spoken of by colonists as "Dick King's ride," and worthy to be placed side by side with the ride of Paul Revere from Charlestown to Concord. Prompt action was as natural to British commanders under such circumstances then as now. The troops, arriving off Durban, were quickly landed; an action followed; the Boers were defeated; the garrison was relieved; and the object of the expedition seemed to have been accomplished.

The difficulties of the British commander, however, were, in fact, only just beginning. Had not that commander been a man of quick insight, determination, and, above all things, a Dutchman by birth, it is impossible to say how long the struggle might have gone on. The British troops, for want of transport, and through ignorance of the country, could only advance a very short distance from the coast. But their difficulties were not known to the Dutch leaders, and Colonel (now General Sir Josias) Cloete, a member of one of the oldest Cape families, who had obtained a commission in the British army, seized the opportunity to negotiate. Accepting an invitation to a conference, he rode boldly to Pietermaritzburg, accompanied only by two officers. The first person he met was Piet Uys, the very same man who, then grown old, enlisted the respect of Sir Evèlyn Wood during the Zulu war. Piet Uys, who had often shot with the colonel over his father's estates at Cape Town, was petrified. "My God, Josie!" he cried out in Dutch, "was it you riding at the head of the troops when they landed the other day? And I had laid my gun for you, and grumbled when it missed fire."

Then followed long and warm discussion, the more extreme party among the Dutch being for fighting, the more moderate for a compromise. On one thing Colonel Cloete insisted — submission before negotiation, offering an amnesty to all but one or two,

and specially excepting one Servaas Van Breda, who had commanded the Dutch forces. At last, helped much by the British commander's knowledge of the men, and of their language, and by the tact displayed by a young Dutchman, Mr. J. N. Boshoff (who afterwards became President of the Free State), a settlement was arrived at. The Boers who chose to remain in the country acknowledged the Queen's sovereignty, and returned to their homes with their arms and their horses. Those who disliked the position—and these were not a few, and included the family of Uys—retired above the Drakensberg, seeking a rougher independence in the then almost unknown districts of the Transvaal. In Natal itself the pacification was for the moment complete, thanks to the moderation of Colonel Cloete, who, praised by the Government, was abused for his moderation by those who had in view the profit to be made out of confiscated farms. Even the exceptions to the amnesty were not adhered to, and only a year or two ago the very same Servaas Van Breda, on whose head a price was set in 1842, might be seen sitting as a member of a Legislative Council convened in the name of the Queen.

So far, then, the Dutch exodus had in this direction led to the establishment of a new centre of civilisation. Later, an active English element was brought into the Colony, and grafted into the old Dutch stock, making that happy combination of

qualities which, unless seeds of bitterness are allowed to be perpetuated, will one day make South Africa a great country.

Meantime, how fared things to the north of the Orange river? How did the Boers, who had settled there, get on with their new-found independence? For six years they remained undisturbed, fondly believing that they had at last reached a place where the British Government ceased from troubling. Then an odd phenomenon occurred. A Cape Colony Judge, acting on his own authority, and forestalling the action of Sir Theophilus Shepstone, one day crossed the Orange river, and proclaimed as British territory the whole country to the northward of the 25th degree of south latitude, and to the eastward of the 22d degree of east longitude,—a pretty sweeping transaction, seeing the country so proclaimed to be annexed included the whole of Griqualand West and the Free State, the greater part of the Transvaal, and a vast portion of the great Kalihari Desert. Repudiated in letter by the Governor of the Cape, this little act of annexation was, nevertheless, accepted in spirit. As in Natal, so in the Free State; the British Government, acting the part of an Irish landlord, deemed it necessary to confiscate the Dutchman's improvements. Soon opportunity arose for a more open act of interference. The Free State Boers were involved in a quarrel with the neighbouring Griquas, and the Cape Government

sent the Griquas armed support. This was in 1845, and three years later, though not until the battle of Boomplats had been fought between British troops and Dutch farmers, the Queen's authority over the Free State was formally declared. Again, as in Natal, part of the Boers submitted; part trekked farther away, crossing the Vaal river, and establishing the Transvaal Republic. They might, perhaps, have saved themselves the trouble, for in 1854—six years after the battle of Boomplats, and two years after the recognition of Transvaal independence by the Sand River Convention—Great Britain grew tired of the Orange River Sovereignty, as the Free State was then called, and cast it off to shift for itself. But, though since then independent, contented, and prospering, maintaining peace in its borders, and growing the greater portion of the South African wool that is shipped from Cape ports, and for which the Cape Colony claims credit, the Free State has not been left unmolested and unplundered.

The discovery of diamonds some ten or twelve years back led to the annexation, partly by intrigue and partly by force, of an undoubted portion of Free State territory to the British Crown. Why should independent Dutchmen have diamond mines in their territory? Owing to the tact and temper displayed by President Brand, there was no open rupture, however. The matter was compromised; an imaginary boundary line was drawn which placed the

richest diggings just outside Free State jurisdiction; and a sum of £90,000 was paid to the Free State as compensation out of the Imperial Treasury.

There, then, in this quiet and pastoral State, where the Englishman lives cheerfully and uncomplainingly beneath a Dutch Republican Government; where, in the capital, an English bishop has his cathedral and his other works of usefulness; where the two European languages of South Africa meet on equal terms, the Dutch for the fireside, the English for the banker's counter and the merchant's desk,—there is another result, and a happy one, of the great Dutch exodus from the eastern districts of the Cape Colony. With the exception of the war with the Basutos in 1868, the history of the Free State since its abandonment by the British Government in 1854 has been a history of unbroken peace, and slow, gentle progress. There, on those wide extended plains, some 5000 feet above the sea level, buttressed half-way round by the giant masses of the Drakensberg, the Free State farmer has bred his horses, shorn his sheep, raised his corn, planted his orchards, in the purest and driest atmosphere, perhaps, in the world. Wars have raged all round him, but he has not been touched; British Governors, each with a policy reversing that of his predecessor, have come and gone at Cape Town, producing unequal political strains that have given rise to agitations, anxieties, even outbreaks. But the Free State farmer has lived

and prospered undisturbed, welcoming all comers, yet holding his own against all. There were those who, in 1854, prophesied that the abandonment of the Free State to its own devices would lead to an internecine war for supremacy within its borders between English and Dutch. But there has never been a trace or sign of such a thing. Leave the Englishman in a Dutch State alone, and he knows who are his best customers, and he does not quarrel with them. Leave the Dutchman alone, and his natural sense of hospitality will for ever prevent his setting his face against people who come to him openly and honestly, without intent to intrigue against his liberty or to vilify his character.

But the Transvaal,—was that a happy result of the Boer exodus? Yes, certainly, though even in one sense no. It was a happy result in this respect, that it brought under the touch of civilisation—civilisation rough and rude enough, it is true, but still civilisation—vast districts into which, save as a hunter or an explorer, the Englishman would never have passed. It was not a civilisation of external refinement; your attorney's clerk, who has tumbled into disgrace in London, and goes out to practise law in what was once a South African Alsatia, sneers at the rude manner of living that prevails over the country districts, and subscribes to get a billiard table and a mixer of "drinks" imported from England. But, in spite of this rudeness of external

things, that Transvaal civilisation has been a civilisation of moral virtues of no small worth, which, long denied, are to-day recognised. In one sense happy, but in another not; for in the Transvaal have been of necessity collected the most uncompromising Dutch natures—the men who, in their extreme of political Calvinism, would hold no parley with British rule either in the Free State or in Natal. There, beyond the Vaal, have passed the men inspired with the bitterest memories—the Prinsloos and Bezuidenhouts, who were concerned in the rising that led, in 1815, to that awful tragedy at Slaghter's Nek. Men whose natures are cast in so stern and uncompromising a mould, are not, if left to brood over their traditional injuries, likely to be happy in themselves. But they are nevertheless men who are likely—far more likely than their kinsfolk who have remained in the Free State and in Natal—to resist desperately, and to the last. There is not left for them that door for retreat which was opened for their grandfathers across the Orange River, for their fathers across the Vaal. British authority asserts itself in front of them; the tropical wilds of Central Africa lie behind. Should they prove desperate, whose fault will it be?

CHAPTER VIII.

ENGLISH ENTERPRISE.

BUT it is really time, you will say, to hear something about what Englishmen have done in South Africa. Even admitting all that is urged on behalf of the Dutch, still there is a strong British element in the country, and that strong British element must be considered and consulted in respect of anything that is done in the future.

Without doubt there is this strong British element —an element which is of the utmost importance both for the present and for the future. We got a glimpse of what it can do when we looked in at Port Elizabeth; and if first place has been given to Dutch notions and interests, it has been in a great degree because those came first to hand, and also partly because English interests have never any lack of people to represent them. Besides, the Dutch came first in point of time, and have, as has been seen, laid the foundations of civilisation wherever they went. Building on these foundations, with the good will and cordial agreement of those

who laid them, the Englishman in South Africa can do much that the Dutchman can never do. Let him, however, beware how he disagrees with his foundations, or seeks to kick them away after he has raised his own structure upon them; for in that case his own structure, substantial though it may seem for a time, will infallibly crumble to pieces.

Where shall we go to see what English enterprise can do? As I have said, we got a glimpse of it in the Eastern Province of the Cape Colony, but it is not there that I intend to take you for the purpose of tracing out its work. Just now we followed the Dutch exodus across the Orange River, and through the passes of the Drakensberg, till we emerged with its leaders on the plains—though plains is a misnomer—of Natal. That was the Dutch road to Natal. Now let us take the English road; let us follow the great sea-path round the coast,—the path that was taken by Colonel Cloete and his reinforcements when that message of peril to a British force, brought by Dick King to Grahamstown, reached the ears of the Governor at Cape Town Castle.

We have got to Port Elizabeth already, as you know, and the same little steamer, the *Melrose*—did I mention her name before?—will carry us on to Natal. The *Melrose* was built specially for the service between Cape Town and Natal, as was also her sister vessel, the *Dunkeld;* for our friend Mr. Currie, when he got a special mail contract signed for Natal, was

far too liberal a man to put off his new customers with old steamers. It would neither pay him, he considered, nor them. And so these two pretty but remarkably substantial little steamers were put on the coast for the express purpose of giving Natal colonists their letters from England regularly once a fortnight. The *Melrose*, curiously enough, began her experiences with a remarkable run of bad luck, for she broke her screw-shaft twice, and was compelled to idleness while a new shaft was sent out from England. Since then, however, she has run without a mishap, notwithstanding the dangers of the coast and the buffeting of those curiously perpendicular seas off Cape Agulhas. And she is well commanded, too. If you ever want to light upon a sample of a thoroughly trustworthy and plucky British seaman, remember Captain Rose of the *Melrose*. There have been certain exploits of his in the way of saving life along this dangerous coast which other people very well remember, though the hero-in-chief has possibly forgotten them.

So the anchor at Port Elizabeth is weighed, and away we run to the eastward, parallel with a line of low, sandy, desolate-looking coast, anything but suggestive of the presence of an active and pushing British community. The weather is calm enough to-day; the wind that was blowing off shore at Port Elizabeth dies away as we leave the anchorage behind, confirming the notion that, like the Cape Town

south-easter, it is only a local affair. A little farther and there is an island ahead, low and sandy, like the mainland off which it lies; and as the weather is clear, and there is no sign of a breeze from anywhere, our skipper deems it no harm to cut off a corner and pass inshore of it. Still the same interminable line of level coast, wearying to look at as we pass, with the white beach showing bright in the moonlight when the night falls. We left Algoa Bay at about five in the evening, and by five or six next morning we shall be, so says the first officer, at East London. So we are up early to look out, for anything is a relief in this monotonous coasting trip.

Sure enough, as the day wakes up and we come round a blunt point of land—South Africa had all its sharp points, with the exception of Cape Point, rubbed off ages ago—there is a little collection of shipping to be seen ahead of us. But where is the port? Is there a port there at all? These vessels seem simply lying off the coast, between which and themselves there is a clear interval of horizon. Yet they could hardly have got there accidentally. No; that must be the port of East London, after all. But what a place! A port, according to all previously formed ideas, should be marked by some sort of an estuary, or a natural harbour, or a bay, or something of that kind. Even at Port Elizabeth there is a bay, though a shallow one. But here there is absolutely nothing of the kind. The coast, somewhat

higher than it has been before, preserves an unbroken line, and down through a narrow gap comes a river that enters the Indian Ocean at right angles, as if making a futile shot at the Antarctic Pole. Yet there must be trade here, for there are houses planted pretty thickly on the high bank at either side of the river, and you can catch, moreover, the white puffs of steam from an engine on the wharf. Do we go in there? No; nothing in the way of shipping ever goes in there. There is a bar at the river mouth, and a fearful surf; and though there are people who hope that by means of a breakwater now constructing the bar may be scoured away, as yet the results are singularly small. "But then," plead the friends of the breakwater, "its benefit cannot possibly be felt till it is finished." Finish it, then, with all speed; but in the meantime do not be surprised at that verdict of merchant skippers, which declares that to be sent with a cargo to East London is as bad as being sent with a cargo to—well, to purgatory.

For though it is fine weather to-day, it is still pretty easy to see that a considerable surf is running on the bar, and that the big lumps of cargo-boats have some trouble in getting in and out. It is a curious work getting ashore here. Look at these East London passengers, too many to be taken in the lifeboat (a wet and unpleasant business often enough). So, after a goodly number of packages, seeming mostly to contain champagne and brandy,

have been extracted from the forehold and bumped down into the bottom of the cargo-boat alongside—a mere ugly black barge, without a mast or a sail of any kind—the passengers are informed that they must move. If it is too rough for them to jump, then they can be let down in a basket; but in either case down they must go and sit on the champagne cases. And then, just when they are feeling uncommonly uncomfortable, the hatches are put on over them, and they are most carefully covered up. A small tug that has been hovering about takes them in tow, conducts them to the outside of the surf opposite the river-mouth, and there leaves them. And now, if you are unlucky enough to be down in that close, queer-smelling hold, and lucky enough to retain your stomachic equilibrium, you will very soon find out why the hatches were so carefully replaced. There is a buoy hereabouts tossing in the broken water, and a little groping about near this buoy with a boat-hook reveals a rope. That rope is laid right across the bar, from the smooth water in the river to a point outside the surf, and on that rope depends your chance of getting safely inside. It is a very simple matter in theory; all you have to do is to get the rope on board and warp yourself along with it, till the inner harbour is reached. But it is by no means so simple a matter in practice, with the large rollers sweeping in and covering the boat's deck from one end to the other, threatening to

twist her bows round, and hurl her, broadside-on, to instant and certain destruction.

Long, however, before our late fellow-passengers have got half-way over the bar, we, who pity their fate from the secure deck of the steamer, are out of sight round the next corner, and beginning our twenty-four hours' run to the Port of Natal. And now the coast becomes a shade more interesting. Presently we pass the mouth of the Kei River, the boundary between the Cape Colony proper and those "Transkeian Districts" which, peopled almost entirely by natives, are under the control of the Cape Government. Then we pass Mazeppa Bay, if it can be called a bay, where a futile attempt was made during the frontier war of 1877—the war that brought downfall to the member for Namaqualand and his colleagues—to land a force of troops. The truth is, landing on this coast under any circumstances is almost an impossibility by reason of the surf. So unbroken is the coast-line, that, keeping the shortest course possible to our destination, we are never more, and not often less, than a couple of miles from it. And now there is a complete change in the scenery. Instead of a flat, barren, sandy shore, there are precipitous rocks, some hundreds of feet high, and crowned with magnificent timber. And, suddenly, the rocks seem to split asunder, and we get a sight of a deep gorge, through which, clearly, a river finds its way to the sea. That is the

mouth of the St. John's river, often known by its prettier native name of Umzimvubu, the scene of one of the most high-handed outrages against native rights ever perpetrated in the name of the Queen. For we are now off the coast of Pondoland, whose independent chief, Umquikela, has been, as was his father before him, a staunch ally of the British Government. Yet his fidelity could not save him, in the days when the small Imperialism of South Africa was treading in the steps of the big Imperialism of Great Britain, from being slandered, intrigued against, held guilty of an offence he had never committed, and sentenced to the loss of the very slice of his territory which he had, in answer to more straightforward overtures, over and over again refused to part with. You know what it is to "boycott" a man. Do you know what it is to "naboth" him? For Umquikela was "naboth'd" most completely. There will be more to say about this some day.

But we have meantime been steaming on; we have long ago passed certain landmarks which are known to the initiated as marking the boundary between Pondoland and Natal. The coast, which has again become flat, is, however, now thickly wooded, and on a high bluff a few miles ahead there is seen a tall white lighthouse, with a lofty flagstaff beside it. There is an unmistakable look of business about this new object, and you know almost without being

told that round that bluff lies our ultimate destination. Still, the thought cannot help occurring that this is a strangely disrespectful manner in which to approach a great continent. If the coast had some deep indentation, or if there were an island or two lying off it, or anything to break the approach, there would be a fitness about the arrangement which you could appreciate. But no,—that is Africa, just as it might be the Isle of Wight, stretching, as soon as you land, without a break to the Mediterranean. There is, however, little time to reflect upon all this, for in a few moments more we round the Bluff, and open out the anchorage.

"What a pretty place!" is your first exclamation. And it is surely justified; for the port of Natal is quite the prettiest port in South Africa. The barren aspect of the coast has gone. Everywhere there is the freshest green, with that semi-tropical touch about it which serves to remind you that you are now some four degrees nearer the line than you were at Cape Town. The steep bluff,—it is simply "The Bluff" and nothing more in the Natal colonist's speech and thought,—with its thickly wooded sides, now bounds the shoreward landscape to the left, while just below it you look into the narrow entrance, the Bluff Channel, of the land-locked harbour. It was across that channel, from the low point of land towards the right, that Dick King swam before he started on his memorable ride to

Grahamstown; and it is a far longer swim than it looks from here, as you will find if ever you take a boat across. That sandy point—called "the Point," as the bluff is called the Bluff—is where all the shipping business of the port goes on, for the town is a couple of miles away. There, clustered together by the wharves, are the Custom House, the Railway Station, the Harbour-Master's Office, and all other necessary adjuncts of a busy seaport. Yes! busy; for Durban is by no means an idle or a sleepy place. It is, in fact, the most go-ahead town in South Africa, let Port Elizabeth folk say what they will. Forty years ago, when Colonel Cloete landed here with his much welcomed force, there was just a hut or two built in the bush near the Point. Now, there is a population of 10,000, and a town which we will have a peep at presently. As for newspapers—and they constitute a pretty good test of the enterprise of any place—Durban is the best supplied town in South Africa. Cape Town, for instance, with its population of 35,000, has its two English daily papers, and its two Dutch papers, each published three times a week. Port Elizabeth, with its 15,000, has never started a daily paper yet. But Durban has for some time provided its 10,000 with two papers every day. And one of these papers, the *Natal Mercury*, conducted by one of the most prominent members of the elected Legislature, is certainly the most enterprising journal in South Africa;

and as I totally dislike its politics, I may claim to be an impartial witness.

You will not now, I hope, complain that I am disposed to depreciate the English element in South Africa. It would be foolish, and worse than foolish, to do so. The English element has enormous power, and, if not misguided—if not encouraged from without to place itself in antagonism to the Dutch element, which is its co-worker and best friend—it will achieve wonders. But let us go ashore in the little steam tender that has come alongside—even in this respect there is a vast superiority over Port Elizabeth—and see what there may be to be seen.

The bar has to be got over; you have heard of the Natal Bar, no doubt,—a standing joke at public dinners, and a standing nuisance to both shippers and skippers. It is, however, not nearly as bad as the East London Bar. There the depth of water is not more than three or four feet; here there is from eight to twelve, and sometimes more. The *Melrose* will come in easily at the next tide, and lie moored in perfect security in perfectly calm water till the day before she is due to depart westward again. But the bar is a drawback, there can be no doubt, and all round you can see traces of vain and uncompleted —perhaps vain because uncompleted—efforts to diminish or remove it. Every civil engineer who has ever had a foothold in the colony has had a try at the solution of the bar problem, and some of their tries

have been tolerably expensive. Under the Bluff you can see a short length of timber staging that represents one of these attempts—an attempt that was going on entirely to the satisfaction of its projector, until one night the sea swept the work nearly all away. On the right, and running a long distance out from the Point, is another attempt, which, though not obliterated, has been hardly more successful. If any one could understand the ways of the bar, the task would be a good deal easier. But the truth is, no one has as yet managed to get at the root of the matter. The channel shifts from day to day, and only the pilots who go in and out daily and hourly know its exact condition. Sometimes the bar is "good," no one knows why. Sometimes, on the very day perhaps on which you wish it to be good, it behaves as badly as possible. And notwithstanding the fine weather, it is not behaving particularly well to-day; for here is one of the breakers putting a considerable portion of its crest over our taffrail, and deluging half the deck and most people's legs with water.

It is only, however, for a minute or so that this crisis lasts. The engines never flag for an instant, and another fifty yards places us in smooth, still water, as much beyond the reach of the swell outside as if a door had been shut behind us. We steam rapidly up the channel between the Bluff and the Point, and then, as we turn sharply round to the

right to make for the landing place, we become more completely aware of the rare beauty of the scene. For this harbour of Natal is a landlocked tidal lake, wooded down to its very edge all round, with low, wooded islands filling up its centre, and wooded ranges looking down upon it on every side except that nearest the sea. Yonder you may mark where the white houses of Durban peer out of the deep foliage by the water's edge; farther up the same side of the bay—will you remember that the three leading features of the harbour of Natal are the Bay, the Point, and the Bluff?—lies Congella, where forty years back that cunning Field-cornet Joubert out-manœuvred and defeated the little British force; while behind all, some three miles distant, lies the picturesque ridge of the Berea, dotted with its sumptuous villas, the houses of the British merchants of Durban. There are few houses in South Africa more luxurious than these. But even luxury has its drawbacks, and the Berea has its snakes, and it is always just as well to look under your bed every night, especially if your room opens off a verandah. A big black snake is not a pleasant thing to have crawling about you in the dark.

As for the town, which we reach after a few minutes' railway journey from the Point—the streets, the people, the offices, the banks—they are English to the letter. There are Germans in the place; there are Frenchmen, sugar-planters from Mauritius; but

of Dutchmen I don't think you would find one. The only remnant of the Dutch *régime* is the ox waggon, and even this is disappearing since the railway was opened up-country. The railway, it is true, is not all that it should be, or all that the bustling English community here would, if they could have had their own way, have made it. Natal, though possessing its elected Legislature, is still under the thumb of the Colonial Office, and the Colonial Office makes it its peculiar business first to thwart and then to mar the efforts of colonists everywhere after self-advancement. The colonists would have laid their line with steel rails, fifty pounds at least to the lineal yard. The Colonial Office insisted that there should only be iron rails, forty pounds to the lineal yard. The colonists have asked to be allowed to try the Fairlie engine, as specially suited to the steep gradients that have to be surmounted. The Colonial Office thinks that Fairlie engines are far too recent an invention for it to take cognisance of. The colonists would like as much steam as is necessary, but the Colonial Office thinks a pressure of 120 lbs. to the square inch is quite as much as can with safety be allowed in a colony possessed of a large native population. And so the railway, its carrying capabilities being limited, has not altogether driven out the ox waggon as yet.

Yet that railway, crippled and trammelled as it is, is the most certain outward and visible sign of the presence of the progressive English element. It

has surmounted the most formidable engineering obstacles, as you may see if you take the trouble to make a journey by it from the port to the capital. Natal, as you know rises up from the sea to the Drakensberg in a series of steps. In the first ten miles of direct distance there is a rise of 1200 feet, and before Maritzburg is reached—the "Pieter" is always dropped by the colonist—a height of nearly 3000 feet has to be crossed. When the railway is extended inland, the very first thing to be done will be to surmount a step up of some 1700 feet in a direct distance of seven miles—a work only to be accomplished by a careful laying out of the line in serpentine curves along the hillsides. Some day, and before very long, that will be done, however, and by that time it may be hoped that the Colonial Office will have repented itself, and will not seek to compel the adoption of appliances which will render useless the expenditure of colonial capital and the pledging of colonial credit.

All this English enterprise has done, and more than all this. It has brought in the sugar-cane, planted the sugar-estate, introduced the machinery for the sugar-mill. It has, with much expense, and after repeated failures and disappointments, improved everywhere the breeds of cattle, of sheep, of horses. It has spent money in agricultural experiments, sometimes with success, always with instruction. It has covered bleak hillsides with magnificent planta-

tions. It has erected the saw-mill, now working busily by steam on the bank of the stream that once supplied, in more primitive days, the only available motive power. It has raised the public buildings that adorn the streets, the banks and warehouses unequalled in any town in South Africa. It has laid out the public gardens and the parks; it has made the roads and built the safe and solid bridges over dangerous rivers. And all this without the expenditure on its behalf of a single penny out of the Imperial treasury.

And all this in less than forty years, and positively out of nothing. When Dick King swam across to the Bluff, Durban, as I have said, consisted merely of a few huts. Maritzburg had, it is true, been laid out by the followers of Pieter Retief and Gert Maritz, whence its name; but the town was still a mere skeleton—streets planned and named on which the native grass and brushwood was still growing, and along which not a house had been built. English enterprise might, indeed, be said to date from only thirty years back, for it was only in 1849 that any great influx of British settlers took place. And these settlers, there can be no question, were most miserably deceived. They were brought out under representations which were utterly false, and pitched down in the country to shift for themselves. And they did shift for themselves. They saw that they had been grievously cheated, but, there being

no help for it, they made the best of the position. Turning their hands to whatever came next, they, in almost every instance, rose to prosperity or even fortune on their very disappointments. There is probably not one of them who is now occupied in the manner in which, when he left England, he expected to be occupied. Yet it is doubtful whether any one of them has not done better than his original expectations led him to hope. And all this success has been made, as it were, out of nothing. There has been no special and exclusive stimulus to progress in Natal. There has been no gold-rush, such as raised Melbourne in a few years from a small hamlet to a city fit to compare with those of Europe. True, the discovery of diamonds at Kimberley gave Natal colonists a lift. The colony was in a bad way financially at the moment, and the springing up of the new enterprise saved it, some say, from something like bankruptcy. But after all, the influence of the diamond-fields has been very much divided. The export trade in diamonds all goes through Cape Town, while Port Elizabeth, not less than Natal, has a hold on the import trade by which the diamonds are paid for.

You admit the enterprise of the English colonist in Natal, but you do not like the man? Ah! that is just because you do not know him, and because, too, whenever your attention has been drawn to him in any marked manner, it has always hap-

pened that he has been misrepresented, and has been bent on misrepresenting himself. In some respects, indeed, the English colonist has been as badly slandered to all you good people at home as the Dutch Boer has been. The Dutch Boer has been represented to you as a slave-owner by nature and by habit, while the English colonist has been represented as equally given to native ill-treatment, though in a different sort of way. He does not enslave the native, you think, but he kicks him, shoots him down, steals his land, and so on. There have been, no doubt, cases of native ill-treatment at the hands of British colonists, and there have been times when the spirit of passion, born partly of panic, and partly of mistrust of the intentions of the Imperial Government—keep this last fact in mind—has pitched the public voice into a frantic shout for something almost like native extermination. This state of feeling existed after the disaster of Isandhlwana, and a very unpleasant state of feeling it was for those whose convictions and ideas led them in a contrary direction. Something of the same feeling, too, existed in 1873, when the Langalibalele rebellion—if it was a rebellion—occurred. But there were in each of these cases certain special exciting causes which I may hint at elsewhere, and to suppose that the feeling manifested then is any true criterion of the feeling of the enterprising British colonist of Natal towards the natives who live beside him, would be to make a capital error. Wait a little, and we shall see.

Take him, then, as he is; try to understand him and to do him justice, and you will like him. Don't seize upon some prominent failing, as mere flying visitors are prone to do, and regard this as including and expressing his whole character. Put yourself—as you did with the Cape Dutchman of fifty years ago—put yourself in his place. And remember, above all things, what you must not expect to find. You will not find a man—and I am speaking of the average specimen—well educated or cultured, accustomed to look very deeply into the causes and meanings of things. A ready-minded man, he takes the ideas that come readiest to hand, and these are often enough cheap and commonplace. The British soldier is to him the most concrete manifestation of Imperial authority, and hence his notions as to Imperial policy are military. For the same reason a Tory Government at home claims his admiration, however great a Radical he may be himself in respect of local concerns. He is generous in his impulses, hearty in his hospitality. If he likes you, he will do a good deal to serve you, and it will take a good deal to make him dislike you. But there is a limit which you must not pass—there are two sins which you must not commit, for they are unpardonable. You must not write a book abusing the colony; and you must not be a follower, in the matter of politics, of Dr. Colenso.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RAW NATIVE.

YES, it is here that you will find him, in Natal; the raw native, living side by side with the civilised European, and presenting, therefore, a problem to be dealt with.

In Natal, rather than anywhere else. The conditions under which the native lives elsewhere may sometimes resemble the conditions under which he lives in Natal. But the problem to be solved will not there present any greater difficulties than it presents in Natal. And if you can solve the native difficulty in Natal you can solve it anywhere.

Take things as they are at this moment, and see how the native is situated all over South Africa. What is his position in the Cape Colony, for example,—the Cape Colony proper, exclusive of any jurisdiction that may be held to prevail over regions to the north of the Orange river, and exclusive, too, of the essentially native districts to the east of the Kei?

In the Cape Colony proper the natives have ceased

to exist, except as units. Whether the steps that have led to this result have been wrong or right, the fact is so at the present day, and nothing can alter it. For years after that war of 1835, which led to Lord Glenelg's unfortunate and mistimed despatch, the warlike tribes on the eastern frontier, inhabiting in a large degree the districts formerly known as British Kaffraria, were a source of apprehension and anxiety to the Colonial Government. These tribes, known by the collective title of the Amaxosa, and including both Gaikas and Galekas, were, next to the Zulus, the most formidable native race in South Africa. They were concerned in the fourth Kafir war,—the "War of the Axe,"—in 1847, and in the fifth Kafir war, in 1850 and 1851. Each time that war broke out they were pressed farther eastward, until, in the war of 1877-78, which led to the downfall of the Molteno Ministry, they were finally broken up, and their remnants removed across the Kei.

It is useless now to go into the rights and wrongs of the questions involved in this series of wars, though it may be useful, in connection with another matter, to take note of the manner in which some of them were brought about. It is sufficient to recognise the facts as they exist, and to recognise the most important fact of all,—that, so far as the Cape Colony proper is concerned, there is no native question to be dealt with. There are natives living as units among

the European population, but these are subject to the ordinary law of the Colony, and demand no special treatment. There can be no doubt that, no matter by what means this state of things has been brought about, the way is very much cleared as regards the future. There is a clear and distinct line drawn now between the territories which are European and the territories which are native; and it becomes, therefore, much easier to place the two under different forms of government and administration. This it is that enables Mr. Saul Solomon, and other defenders of native rights, to stand forward and say:—"Leave us in the Cape Colony to our own self-government, as provided by the arrangements entered into when the Molteno Cabinet first took office, and place the purely native districts under the direct authority of the Crown, exercised through the Governor at the Cape. These natives will gladly pay sufficient taxes for the purposes of their own Government, and the surplus revenues can be devoted to their own gradual elevation and improvement. You will need European magistrates, probably with native assessors, thus to give the chiefs some interest in the preservation of order; you will need a native police, probably under European officers, to keep the peace. And if the colonists, through their elected representatives, are given some right of veto in respect of legislation for these native districts, so that they may have a *locus standi*, and be aware of

what is going on, they would probably be perfectly satisfied."

This is an arrangement that would include the Basutos, and all the tribes in the Transkeian districts, such as Galekas, Tembus, Fingoes, Pondomise, even Pondos, if the last-named are willing to surrender their nominal independence. It is an arrangement which might, perhaps, one day be applied to Zululand, or even to those districts to the north of the Transvaal which inquiry may show to be distinctly native. Wherever, in fact, there is a distinctly homogeneous native population, occupying a distinct piece of territory, the solution of the native question would not be difficult, if only the matter can be approached with a quiet and patient temper, and with a resolve to avoid, as far as possible, friction with reasonable colonial interests.

For let me give you a warning. Bad as you may, either by prejudice or by proof, think colonists to be in respect of their treatment of native races, you will gain nothing for the native by adopting his cause against the colonist. This was the capital mistake made by Lord Glenelg in 1835, and the results of that mistake are still, even five-and-forty years later, to be felt. You may, by going on the humanitarian tack to-day, force colonists to submit to measures they dislike. But to-morrow the humanitarian fit in England will have gone by. An occasion of renewed conflict will arise between colonists and

natives, and the colonists will, without consciously intending it, take their revenge upon the natives for your interference upon the former occasion. I am not stating a mere abstract proposition. This is what has actually ere now happened. For there can be no doubt whatever that the fourth Kafir war of 1846, resulting in the annexation of a large extent of what was before purely native territory, sprang directly from Lord Glenelg's unfortunate interference with the results of the war of 1835. The European colonist, remember, is bound to win in the long run, for as soon as ever there seems anything like a prospect of his being exterminated, the whole nation would rush, regardless of cost, to his assistance. And if, therefore, you have any regard for the native, keep on good terms with the colonist. It will cost you little, and it will repay you much.

Our work is not now, however, with the raw native who occupies his own territory, as distinct from territory occupied by Europeans; nor is it with the native who, living as a unit in the midst of a European population, is subject to the ordinary law of the colony. What we have to do with is the raw native living a distinct life of his own, yet in the midst of a European population. This is the most difficult problem of all; and if we can solve it satisfactorily, we need not despair of solving any other South African difficulty. It is a problem that presents itself with peculiar force in Natal, and it is in

Natal that it must be studied. And the seriousness of the question will be better understood when it is remembered that, while the European population of Natal does not exceed 30,000, the native population cannot be set down at less than 300,000.

"What then!" you cry out; "Natal is clearly a native district, and must be treated as such. Where is the right of the 30,000 Europeans, be they Dutch, English, or Germans, to dominate ten times their number of natives?"

Wait a moment; the position has, I admit, this sort of look about it at first sight. But you will, I think, find reason considerably to modify the impression first made.

If you come to examine the title of Europeans to the possession of Natal, you will find it hardly possible to imagine a title so completely without a flaw. Colonisation is, as we know, frequently brought about by conquest. A small party of European pioneers land on shores occupied by some independent native race, and receive permission to establish a trading settlement. The Europeans, belonging to the stronger and more active race, become gradually aggressive. Dispute arises, followed by war, and the result of the war is the conquest of a certain portion of native territory by the Europeans, which is never given up again. That is the manner in which a good deal of colonisation in South Africa has been brought about. You may regard this as a process

which is inevitable, but it nevertheless is a process which, looked at from a high moral point of view, is undesirable.

The history of the colonisation of Natal is, however, totally free from any trace of European aggression.

When, in 1836, Pieter Retief and his followers came down upon Natal through the passes of the Drakensberg, the colony was swept almost completely clear of population. It had been conquered by the armies of the great Zulu king Chaka, and its original native population, a peaceful and inoffensive race, swept far away to the westward, finding a lodgment in the western parts of what are now known as the Transkeian districts. The Fingoes, whom you hear of to-day as constituting a loyal frontier tribe under the control of the Cape Government, are, in fact, a remnant of this aboriginal native population of Natal. The country was in Zulu possession; the Zulu king Dingaan was its chief; and Dingaan, as you know, formally ceded it to the Dutch under Retief. The act of cession was made out and duly signed, and was in Retief's possession before the treacherous slaughter began.

Had Dingaan a right to cede that territory? Undoubtedly he had; he was master of it by conquest. That he did not, perhaps, intend to cede it is another question. But there are not many people who will contend that his act of cession was invali-

dated by one of the most horrible and treacherous massacres ever perpetrated. That massacre was avenged, as you know, by the defeat of the Zulus at the battle of the Bloed River in 1838—a battle which, there can be no doubt, made the emigrant Boers the absolute owners of what is now the colony of Natal. Then came the conflict between the emigrant Boers and the British authorities at the Cape, resulting in the proclamation of the Queen's authority over Natal, which has been maintained ever since. The British Government of Natal, therefore, took up the rights conferred under the act of cession, and those rights—if the argument is worth anything—have always been recognised, first by the Zulu king Panda, whom the Dutch raised to the chieftainship of Zululand after the defeat and flight of the treacherous Dingaan, and afterwards by Panda's son and successor, Cetywayo.

Who then are the natives in Natal? Why are there so many of them? What is their position?

The natives in Natal are almost entirely Zulu refugees. Some of them have at one time or another made their exit from Zululand in order to avoid enforced military service; others, and probably the largest number, represent the tribes and families that took part against Cetywayo when, during his father's lifetime, a struggle took place for the right of successorship between himself and another scion of the royal Zulu house. A tremendous battle between the

two Zulu factions was then fought in Zululand, near the banks of the Tugela—the river that divides the lower portion of Natal from Zululand—and hundreds and thousands of the warriors on the vanquished side took refuge under the British Government then established at Pietermaritzburg. For the accommodation of these refugees, large districts in several parts of the colony, which were then unoccupied, were set apart under the name of "native locations," in which a native chief, though subject to the British Government, and acknowledging the Lieutenant-Governor as his "Supreme Chief," exercised, and still exercises, a practically unlimited authority. This is the scheme invented by Sir Theophilus Shepstone, in whose hands centred all the threads of native government for upwards of thirty years. Of the success of the plan adopted you may be able to judge presently.

Observe, then, that in Natal, at least, the usual condition of things is reversed. The native is in a majority, it is true, but it is the native who has come upon the land of the European settler, and not the European settler who has come upon the land of the native. The native came originally to seek the protection which a settled European Government could give him, and that protection has served him in such good stead that he has increased and multiplied and grown wealthy. And if, in return for the protection given him by the European Government, he is to

stand in the way of civilised progress, and to oust the European settler from his land, the injustice would be rather a bitter one.

And now, having got some notion as to the status of the raw native in Natal, let us have a look at him. There is no place where you will see him to better advantage than in Maritzburg; for there, while visible in his perfectly raw condition, he is at the same time forced into an odd sort of contrast with civilised life which serves to bring the problem into all the more vivid relief. Down in Durban and on the coast the imported Coolie has somewhat superseded the Natal Zulu as a labourer and a domestic servant, and the Coolie, though picturesque enough, is not interesting from an African point of view.

Here comes the raw native down the main street of Maritzburg, or rather, here comes a bevy of his female relations—his sisters, and his cousins, and even his aunts, for the withered old crone in the middle of the group must surely be an aunt to somebody. They started from their kraals, perhaps a dozen miles away, at sunrise this morning, and have come into town all the way on foot, following a path known only to themselves—a path that leads across country, up hill and down dale, through the long damp grass on the hill slope, under the overhanging rock, in and out of deep ravines, till it drops somewhere down on a high road in the outskirts of the town. It was somewhere hereabouts that the party

robed themselves for their visit, for you must not suppose that they would trouble themselves with garments all through their long tramp. No; they started from their kraals just as they live at their kraals; one of them, probably, carrying on her head the bundle containing their town attire. And how, you ask, does the raw native woman live at her kraal—or rather at her father's or husband's kraal? Save and except for a small apron of beads hung on a string round her hips, she lives in a sublime state of nature. There never were a people so wanting as the Zulus, whether in Natal or out of it, in a sense of—I was going to say propriety, but it would be far more correct to say that they are wanting in a sense of impropriety. As far as their own natural feelings are concerned, they would walk unclothed down the main street of Maritzburg with as little concern as they move along the hill-side. A higher power has, however, intervened. A law has been laid down by the Great Inkos'—put the heaviest possible accent on the second syllable, and sound the vowel as it is sounded in "hose"—a law has been laid down by the Great Inkos', the Supreme Chief, who lives at Government House, and who only appears even to the most privileged native through the person of the Secretary for Native Affairs, that, whatever may be the custom in the country, clothes of some kind are to be worn in the towns.

So outside the town the robing takes place, and

the procession is presently ready to march in. The operation is a simple one enough, though its results are in some respects odd. The English girl commences with her skirts short, and sees them get longer and longer the farther her head is from the ground. The Kafir custom is just the reverse of this. These two little comical-looking, bright-eyed slips of children, some ten years old, are each swathed up in dignified folds of a brown-coloured blanket, with their heads just peeping out at the top, and their toes showing at the bottom. One of them has a huge gourd balanced on the top of her head, and you would say that, as her glance takes in everything on the two sides of the street, its equilibrium ought to be in jeopardy. But no; it never seems to concern her in the least. With arms closely folded in her majestic blanket, she moves easily along, and you look in vain for any hint of a movement of her elbow to save the load on her head. Then come two girls a few years older, whose blankets, being the same size as those of the small imps, do not cover quite so much of them. They have on their heads bundles of firewood which they have picked up on the way, and which they will sell for a shilling a piece before they leave town again for home. All these, you will observe, wear their short woolly hair in the natural fashion, lying close round their heads. But this somewhat older and more dignified young person, arrayed, not in a brown blanket, but in a more elegant and per-

haps more airy costume of flowing blue, over a short leather kilt or petticoat, with brass wire rings round her arms above the elbow, and round her legs just below the knee—she has adopted a different fashion, and has her hair piled up in a kind of crown some inches above the top of her head. Adopted the fashion, or rather grown into it, for she is a married woman, and expresses the dignity of her position accordingly. One day, no doubt, if you could be sure of identifying her, you will see her march into town with a bundle on her back containing a small black baby, that sleeps contentedly, hung up though it is in a kind of compulsory hammock, all the way from the kraal to the city.

Is the life of these native women a happy one? They are, as you know, little else than as slaves to their husbands, and as chattels to their fathers. The Kafir woman does all the hard work at the kraal, including the preparation of the soil for that "mealie" crop upon which the inmates of the kraal depend in a large measure for their subsistence. In the matter of marriage they have no choice; their father, or, if their father is dead, the inheritor of his paternal rights, sells them as wives to the highest bidder, receiving their price in cows, with which he may himself, if he chooses, purchase new beauties for his own harem. These conditions of life do not seem to have anything particularly cheerful in them. But it is, notwithstanding, impossible to trace any lack of

cheerfulness in the faces of the group we have been looking at. The women are less demonstrative than the men, as they should be. They are silent and dignified as they walk down the street, returning no response to the rallying of sable male admirers from the kerbstone. But there is nothing that suggests want, or conscious hardship, or lack of ability to protect themselves. They are plump and well fed—a Kafir hussy's lower limbs would excite the enthusiasm of Tam o' Shanter himself—while their arms and hands are often perfect models of symmetry. See them when, having turned a deaf ear to the compliments of unrecognised admirers, they meet a friend in the street. This smart young fellow with a radiant face and with his wool arranged round his head in a perfect halo of horns, who comes up and shakes hands with the party all round, is a Government messenger. You can tell that by his spotless white uniform—a loose blouse, and trousers down to the knee—with its red edging, by the red letters worked on the front of the blouse, and even by the short knobbed stick, locally known as a "knobkerie," which he carries loosely in his hand. He is an old friend, evidently. Probably he hails from a neighbouring kraal, which he will visit when he gets leave of absence; possibly he is a relation. But is not the scene, as you watch it, a ludicrous counterpart of European manners—the small girls standing silent in the background, while the older girls talk

over family affairs and the news of the day with a fluency that does credit to their tongues, and a smile that does justice to their teeth?

They are women of business, too. They know the value of money, and know how to make it go farthest. There is always something to be bought when they come into town. A new hoe is wanted for the mealie-garden—did I say that the word "mealies" is simply a synonym for Indian corn? Or a new cooking-pot is required; and the trade done in these can be estimated from the number always ready waiting outside a Kafir storekeeper's door. Perhaps new blankets are in demand, or a bright handkerchief or two, or brass wire for armlets. It is not a mere matter of taking whatever is offered, and being off again. Very far from it. The storekeeper who depends on this class of customers very soon finds that he can't keep their custom unless he meets their views and consults their wishes. The quality of the blanket must be carefully examined; the pot must be minutely inspected for possible flaws; and if what is wanted cannot be obtained at one store, the party will pass on to another. But why wonder at this exhibition of shrewdness? The Kafirs are a veritable nation of bargainers—a fact which is not without its significance with regard to the future.

And the men? Ah, the men, lazy fellows though they are, can hardly be quarrelled with. Were there ever such a people for seeing the comical side of everything

—for understanding a joke, even if made at their own expense? As to the Natal Zulu's costume, if left to himself to select European habiliments, it is simply indescribable. A lad once came to me on the look-out for work arrayed, in perfect conformity with the letter of the regulations regarding clothes, in an old black cloth dress waistcoat, buttoned behind, and a pair of long-cloth tucked—but no, the costume was too indescribable! As for wearing a tall wide-awake hat with the crown fitted somehow on the head, and the brim in the air, that is a small eccentricity. I shall never forget the ludicrousness of a scene once enacted with regard to such a hat. It was during the time of the Zulu war, and I was walking up the main street of Maritzburg in company with an utterly irrepressible Irish member of the Army Medical Department. Presently we came upon a ring of some half-dozen Kafirs, mostly in the employ of neighbouring stores, hobnobbing together on the footwalk, the nearest of whom, standing with his back to our line of advance, had on his head, turned upside down, an enormously tall wide-awake, the hollow cavity of which looked up towards the sky. Stepping up noiselessly behind the owner of the hat, and standing on tiptoe, the Irish M.D. gazes down into the cavity with an expression of intense curiosity. The joke is grasped at once, and the other five members of the group nearly explode themselves with delight. Presently the owner of the hat, seeing that the cause of

the excitement in some way concerns himself, looks round and up over his shoulder, to meet the gaze of the irrepressible M.D. looking down. Do you think there was any resentment in the mind of the owner of the hat in thus being made a jest of? Not a shadow. His whole face expanded into exuberant laughter, and you could see at a glance that he appreciated not only the fact that a joke was intended, but what the joke was.

This power of appreciating humour may seem a small thing, but it is nevertheless without doubt a very valuable index to general character. A sense of humour is almost of necessity associated with a power of judging rapidly and correctly with regard to events and persons, and in this the Zulus of Natal are wonderfully expert. But it is also not seldom associated with a species of sensual laziness for which an antidote may have to be found.

For lazy the Natal Zulu unquestionably is. He has no sense of time whatever. One hour is to him much the same as six, and six much the same as one. Why should he not be lazy? is his own argument, if appealed to on the subject. His wants are startlingly few, nor is there any reason why they should all at once become larger. What are his expenses? If he lives at his kraal, they are next to nothing. He grows—or rather his wife grows—his mealies, and grinds them when ripe, and this supplies nearly all the food he wants. Occasionally he,

with some of his friends, kills an ox, or, better still, an ox dies somewhere of itself, and he gets, for a day or two, as much beef as he wants. If he lives in one of the locations, he pays no rent; if, there being no room in a location, he builds his kraal on unoccupied Government ground, he still pays no rent. All he pays, in recognition of his obligation to the State, is fourteen shillings a-year as "hut-tax." If he erects his kraal on private land, he is not so well off, it is true. He will have to pay a comparatively heavy rental, besides providing a certain amount of labour every year, if required, for the owner of the farm his kraal is on. But even then, what a lucky fellow he is! If he goes out to work he is certain of his twenty-five to thirty shillings a month, and as he gets his food, and in nearly all cases his clothes, all he receives in the way of wages is clear gain. When once, in fact, a Natal Zulu has established himself with a wife and a kraal of his own, it is not worth his while to work for any one. He can enjoy himself in dignified repose at his kraal, taking care of his stock—for he is passionately fond of cattle—basking in the sun, looking out for the best bargains for himself in the shape of husbands for his daughters.

Cows and marriages—round these two points the Natal Zulu's whole existence revolves. And these two points are in a very great degree one. For—and this is a matter which occasions not a little scandal among precise-minded people — no marriage is legal under

Kafir law unless the wife has been purchased from her father, or from the inheritor of paternal rights, by the payment of cattle. And the woman is as strong on the subject as the man. No Zulu woman, with a regard for her own reputation, would be married in any other way. So strong is the feeling, so deeply rooted the tradition, that even where, at the mission stations, nominal Christians are married, the payment of cows, as the civil ceremony, takes precedence of the religious rite before the pastor. Surely a strange and anomalous state of things.

The only good point about the arrangement is this—that it provides a stimulus to work to a portion, at least, of the native population. The younger man, who is independent of his father, will work for a certain length of time every year, though seldom for more than six months together, in order to accumulate money enough to enable him to purchase a wife; and as a wife is worth perhaps five cows, and a cow is worth five pounds, it may be some little time before he can accomplish his wishes. That his bride has any choice in the matter no one supposes for an instant. She is simply sold to the most eligible purchaser. And if she resists—if she is foolish and wilful enough to have a choice of her own—there are means to compel her, of which dwellers in the towns seldom hear anything. Would you believe that in a British Colony, under the direct government of the Crown, women may be tortured to compel them to

marry against their will? Yet that cases of such torturing have occurred in Natal is undoubted.

And this, observe, is the state of things encouraged and allowed to exist among a people who have resorted to the protection of a British Government, and who are therefore, it might be thought, under some obligation in return. As it is, the system under which the raw native lives in Natal is considerably worse for him than the system from which he escaped. All the virtues of a savage life disappear, while all its vices are retained. Faithful as he is towards the Government that protects him—and all through the trying time of the Zulu war his loyalty was splendid—keen politician as he is, industrious trader, when he gets the chance, as fond of law as Dandie Dinmont himself, astute, long-memoried, good-natured, hospitable, utterly devoid of malice or vindictiveness,—yet it cannot be denied that, in respect of many of his practices, he is unutterable. And it is as he gets older and wealthier that he gets worse. Sensual as he is, there is yet one stronger instinct to which he yields—the instinct after money making. Cattle are the wealth he loves to have about him, and what means so good for the obtaining of cattle as the sale of his children? If he pays away cows for another wife for himself, he is sure to get them back one day by the sale of a daughter. And the British Government—not the Government so far as the colonists are concerned, for they have never

been allowed to have any voice in respect of native matters, but the Government as represented by officials directly responsible to the Crown—has not only not discouraged a system so vicious, but has given to it the sanction of law. It has recognised the sale of women by fixing the price payable for a wife; it has resisted every attack, direct or indirect, upon this, the citadel of native immorality; it has organised polygamy by laying down rules of precedence for the several wives of those who may have cows enough to become polygamists; it has sanctioned the right of a native insolvent to include the marriageable value of his daughters in the assets of his estate; it has set its seal of recognition to practices too abominable to mention. It will hardly be believed that in a British colony magistrates have been compelled to hear and decide in cases involving the price paid, or to be paid, for actual immorality. Yet the fact is so, and none know it better than the magistrates of Natal, who are obliged to consider and pronounce upon cases which are revolting to every instinct of a European gentleman.

This is the result, then, of the treatment accorded to the raw native of Natal under the system invented by Sir Theophilus Shepstone. It may not be altogether Sir Theophilus Shepstone's fault. It is often asserted, and perhaps not without truth, that in earlier days he would have recommended a system of a very different kind, and that the Imperial

Government would neither sanction his proposals nor countenance the expense they would involve. This, however, is only shifting the blame a step farther back, and adding another to the sins of South African mismanagement for which successive occupants of the Colonial Office have to answer. To say that this so-called native system—which has simply meant giving the native, who is in this case the intruder, full liberty to do exactly as he pleases—has acted as a blight upon the prosperity of Natal, is to say what is neither more nor less than true. The colonist, whether Dutch or English, is a man of sterling good qualities and some inconvenient prejudices. The native is a being with high capabilities for civilisation, yet possessed nevertheless of savage and unpleasing traditions. You have repressed the colonist's good qualities—his enterprise, his desire to rely upon himself—and strengthened his prejudices. You have discouraged the native from the paths of civilisation, and done your utmost to perpetuate his evil traditions.

And this you call policy!

CHAPTER X.

ISANDHLWANA.

"But why, then, does the British colonist hold Dr. Colenso's political doctrines in detestation? Dr. Colenso is a good man—even we say that, who would not for worlds admit him into our pulpits. And when a good man is held in dislike, the conclusion which most people are likely to draw is that those who dislike him are wicked."

Here we get upon difficult ground. The British colonist in South Africa is undoubtedly a strong opponent of Dr. Colenso, and Dr. Colenso is undoubtedly a man who may be in every sense called good. And yet to conclude that the British colonist is, therefore, an altogether worthless being would be to make a perilous mistake.

Up till the year 1873 there was no one more popular in Natal than Dr. Colenso. His conflict with ecclesiastical authority had rather brought him friends than made him enemies. The colonial idea was that his defiance of orthodoxy was spirited and plucky, and that the treatment he received at the

hands of his ecclesiastical opponents was marked by bigotry and vindictiveness.

Then, in 1873, came a stir among the native refugees in Natal. The chief Langalibalele, who lived with his tribe on his location near Estcourt, showed signs of insubordination towards the Government. He was, there can be little doubt, an intriguing and dangerous character—a man looked up to by other native tribes in Natal as possessed of magical powers. Disagreeable rumours got about of an intended rising of the natives. The native population became restless, the colonists anxious, the Government nervous.

Things came to a crisis. Langalibalele, summoned to attend before the Supreme Chief at Pietermaritzburg and give an account of himself, refused to go, urging as a reason that he feared treachery. Whether the excuse was a sincere one or not, has been a matter of long discussion, and remains a matter of doubt. But at any rate there was an open defiance of the authority of the Government, and it became the duty of the Government to act with firmness.

The Government lacked the capacity to act with firmness. No one in the district in which the chief lived expected serious mischief. Colonists who knew him well did not hesitate to remain quietly on their farms. The district magistrate offered to go down to the chief's kraal with a single policeman, and arrest him. But the Government, paralysed and frightened,

and not improbably in its inner councils divided against itself, did nothing. The agitation and anxiety became greater and greater; a farmer, living in the district most concerned, was stabbed by a Kafir who came to his door at night. The act was probably one of private revenge, but it seemed like a confirmation of the worst apprehensions. And in the middle of it all, Langalibalele, taking his tribe and his cattle with him, abandoned his location with the intention of quitting the colony.

Then the weak heads in Pietermaritzburg acted as might have been expected. They became panic-struck. The troops were ordered out; the volunteer forces called to arms; native contingents asked for from the chiefs, who, it was believed, could most be depended on. To prevent the escape of the recusant chief—as some have averred, to give an appearance of a desire to prevent his escape—one of the most inaccessible passes of the Drakensberg was occupied by a force of volunteers and natives, commanded by the very same Colonel Durnford whose memory is so inextricably mixed up with the disaster at Isandhlwana. If the desire on the part of the colonial authorities was to assume an appearance of vigour while really allowing the recusant chief to escape, their plans were well laid; for the greater part of the tribe had already got over the pass, and all that remained to traverse it was the rear-guard.

Up the pass came the retreating Kafirs; at its

summit stood the force, a small one enough, of Natal Carbineers, supported by a number of loyal natives. With characteristic folly, the Government had tied the hands of the commanding officer, and given him the strictest orders not to commence hostilities. The Kafirs, armed with guns—for the law against the possession of guns by natives was habitually violated, and its violation winked at by the authorities—crept up nearer and nearer to the colonial forces, taking cover behind the rocks which abounded on the spot. Still not a move was made nor an order given. The attitude and manner of the enemy were menacing in the extreme, and they were near enough, too, to taunt the colonial lads, many of whom they knew by name, for their inaction. At last matters became so serious that, the advantage of the position having long ago been thrown away, the order was given to retire. The result was what, with such an enemy, might have been anticipated. Fire was opened from the rocks on all sides. Three volunteers and two loyal natives were shot down, and the remainder retired as speedily as possible. The wonder is that the casualties were so small. But your native is seldom a good shot with a gun, and the better the gun the worse his shooting. For, under the impression that it in some way improves the shooting qualities of his weapon, he invariably, no matter how short the range, puts up the sight as high as it will go.

What followed does not require very much space

to tell. Burning with indignation at the charge of cowardice unworthily levelled at them by Imperial military officers, the colonial volunteers quickly organised an expedition for the purpose of following up and capturing the flying chief. Penetrating the almost impassable fastnesses of the Drakensberg mountains into Basutoland, they found that he had there been arrested by a Basuto chief, from whose hands they took him over, and brought him prisoner to the Natal capital. A court was formed for the trial of Langalibalele and the other native prisoners, over which the Governor, Sir Benjamin Pine, installed himself as president in his capacity of Supreme Chief of the native population. When the accuser sits as judge, conviction of necessity follows, and Langalibalele and others of his tribe were found guilty of rebellion, and sentenced to transportation for life; the Cape Parliament passing an Act enabling their Government to take charge of the convicts, and to keep them in safe custody on Robben Island, a small desolate island, occupied only by a convict station, near the entrance to Table Bay.

There was enough, and more than enough, in all this to arouse the indignation of generous-minded men. The court which sat for the trial of the offenders was notoriously partial, while, owing to the excitement of the moment, the action of those who might have seen fair play was paralysed. Dr. Colenso, who had followed and analysed the evi-

dence, saw, or believed, that an immense wrong had been done, and determined, with all the energy of which he was capable, to set it right. In taking this course he was fighting against a narrow official clique, whose weakness and mismanagement first of all brought about the rebellion, for which they then proceeded to inflict the most exaggerated punishments. In fighting this clique Dr. Colenso believed that he would have the feeling of the colonists, who themselves likewise bore no goodwill towards it, on his side. But he unfortunately reckoned without his host.

He visited England at his own cost; he pleaded the cause of the imprisoned chief with the Colonial Office; he exposed to view, there can be no doubt, not a few of the evils of the native system that had been built up in Natal. He procured an order for the release of Langalibalele from Robben Island, and for his restoration to his place in Natal. So far his mission succeeded completely. But his influence with Natal colonists was gone from this moment.

"What, then? The Natal colonist was then, and is now, the abettor of unjust dealing towards the natives who are in his power."

It may seem to you to be so. But, whatever you do, if you have a regard for the future of South Africa, do not quarrel with the British colonist unnecessarily, and do not call him worse names than you can help. I have asked you, perhaps not with-

out effect, to place yourself in the position of the Dutch settler who emigrated from the Cape Colony some five-and-forty years ago. Try to place yourself also in the position of the British colonist, and see if you cannot be more just to him than you have been. And again, at the renewed risk of incurring a charge of egotism, let me remind you of my own credentials in respect of this native question.

Suppose the fear entertained of a general native rising at the time of the occurrence of this Langalibalele incident had been realised, what would have been the position of the colonists of Natal? Let us grant that there were, including men, women, and children, 25,000 European colonists in Natal, and granting that they were all—or as many as were fit—in some way armed, what could they do against a general rising of 300,000 natives, 50,000 of whom, at least, would be grown men?

Ultimately, you will say, even these odds would not avail the native, who would be completely beaten in the long run. This I believe; but then look at the intervening anxiety, the loss of life, the loss of property. Look at what has been done in native risings in South Africa—in that war of 1835, for example, when 450 homesteads were burnt in one week. Think, too, of the Kafir war of 1851, when, to the horror of all the Cape colonists, the Hottentot police, on whom they largely relied, deserted and went over to the enemy, taking their arms and ammunition.

These are possibilities which the British colonist, who lives in the presence of a large native population, will always have before him. In ordinary times he will, with clear common sense, count up the pros and cons, and reasonably discredit the idea of danger. He knows—and I am speaking of Natal now, as it is a case in point—that the natives value the protection of the British Government, finding that under it no grievous individual wrong will be done them, and that their lives and property are secure. He knows that, owing to inter-tribal jealousies among themselves, a combination of natives is a very unlikely thing to happen. He knows that a small European force is very competent to deal, if promptly used, with a very large body of natives. He even believes that, did a rising take place, his wife and his children would not be molested, though he himself might be murdered. Believing all this, he lives on his farm, separated perhaps by miles from his nearest neighbour, with as much confidence as that with which you occupy your house at Hampstead or Sydenham. Nay, with even more confidence, because you live in nightly dread of burglars, and he can leave all his doors unbolted and his windows open, and not lose a pin.

At times, however, a different feeling comes over him. He gets nervous and anxious, and what seemed the faintest possibility seems to come nearer and become almost probable. How can you account for this?

You cannot account for it, any more than you can account for the accessions of jingoism in England that periodically send the whole nation, together with the *Times*, raging on the war-path. Nothing may happen, and this fit may pass harmlessly off. But it may not, and you know perfectly well that when people grow for any reason suspicious they are very liable to see whatever they suspect. Everything wears a distorted and exaggerated appearance. One little occurrence seems to connect itself with another in a manner which would at ordinary times be laughed to scorn. Picture the state of Othello's mind when he began to be jealous of Desdemona, and you will have a very good idea of the state of the South African colonist's mind when he begins to suspect the loyalty of the natives around him. And as he gets nervous, his Government gets nervous too, and suddenly acts in a way which is really a proof of its own groundless apprehension, but which seems to him as confirmatory of his worst fears. Then, perhaps, as in the Langalibalele case, there comes actual collision; Europeans actually lose their lives, and European *prestige*—a far more important thing to him than British *prestige* is to you—is in danger. He may exaggerate the danger; he is willing to acknowledge that perhaps he does. But of one thing he is firmly and unalterably persuaded,—that if any one thing more than another will tend to bring about the combination which he dreads, it is the spectacle

of European authority set at nought and European forces defeated. He will not preach a general crusade against natives, or alter his native policy, or allow the spirit of distrust altogether to take possession of him. But in this particular case a firm and strong course must be adopted, and an eloquent example made. Firmness is alone that which the native understands, and with firmness offenders must be treated. It is best for the natives themselves, lest they should rise in mischievous though futile rebellion, that this should be done.

Apply this reasoning to the Langalibalele case, and you will, I think, understand it better. There had been, without doubt, a defiance of British authority. A conflict had occurred in which European *prestige* had, no matter from what unavoidable causes, suffered. The lives of colonists had been taken by the followers of the recusant chief. Perhaps the court that tried him was not fairly constituted; perhaps the sentence was excessive—even colonists will admit this. But to do, they say, as Dr. Colenso would have us do—to bring back the chief who had been thus sentenced and to reinstate him over his tribe as if he were the injured party, and we, the colonists, were the offenders—to do this would simply be to proclaim to every native chief in Natal that he was at liberty to ignore the behests of the Government whenever he pleased, and to place our lives and our property at native disposal.

The thing was not done. By the advice of Sir Garnet Wolseley, who shortly after temporarily undertook the administration of affairs in Natal, a compromise was arrived at, and the recusant chief, released "from his island in the sea," was allowed to occupy, under surveillance, a farm near Cape Town. But can you, considering everything, wonder that Dr. Colenso is no longer popular among Natal colonists? Admit, if you will, that the colonist is wrong, but at least try to understand his case. He does not, you will say, act in these matters as a high-minded and generous English gentleman would act. Of course he does not; because he is not a high-minded and generous English gentleman, and no one knows it better than himself. He is what he is; and if you have any regard for the future of South Africa, or for the future of the South African native, you must make the best of him. He has good qualities, if you only take the trouble to find them, and these, if enlisted on your side, will carry you a long way. Run athwart him—accuse him of being the brutal oppressor of the native, and treat him as such—and who do you think will ultimately be the greatest sufferer? The native, undoubtedly. The thing has happened before, and will happen again. For the colonist is on the spot, and you are not; and as the danger of the situation falls to his share, so he can, if he chooses, work things round in a manner altogether to confuse you, and to bring out

an army—which will always come at such a call—to save himself from extermination.

And that, you will say, is what he did in respect of the Zulu business.

This is certainly what colonists have been accused of doing—of crying out for troops to save them from difficulties mostly of their own making, plundering those troops when they came, refusing to bear any portion of the expenses of a war for their own salvation. If these charges were true, they would be serious. But they are, every one, entirely and absolutely false. The Zulu war was, so far as the British side of it was concerned, the production of one man, unabetted and unassisted by a single colonist. And that one man was Sir Bartle Frere.

You will, doubtless, have imagined the colony of Natal, during the months immediately preceding the outbreak of the Zulu war, as in a state of agitation and alarm, with farmers deserting their homes upon the border, the press frantically crying out for troops, and every one immediately expecting to hear of a Zulu army marching across the Tugela.

The actual state of things was as different from this as anything could be. There had been, a short time before, some anxiety with regard to the Zulu question; but it was believed that the worst of that was over. The main cause of dispute between the British Government and the Zulu King was in respect of the boundary between Zululand and the Transvaal.

That, however, had been taken in hand by Sir Henry Bulwer in the beginning of 1878—the ultimatum, you may remember, was sent to Cetywayo in the last month of that year—and it was understood that the evidence was favourable to the Zulu side of the question. Why, then, should the Zulus be on bad terms with the British Government, and why, more especially, on bad terms with the Government of Natal, which had always maintained a cordial understanding with the Zulus?

But there was the violation of Natal territory by the sons of Sirayo, and the outrage on the road engineers by the Tugela. Surely these events had left an unpleasant impression?

As regards the last-named of these matters, my own conviction is that nine colonists out of ten had never even heard of it until they saw it included in the ultimatum as one of the things for which compensation was to be made. As regards the first—the violation of Natal territory by the sons of Sirayo—the effect produced was hardly any greater. Not a single farmer along the exposed border where this occurrence took place left his farm in consequence; while six weeks later, a gentleman who had been on business to Utrecht, in the Transvaal, drove back to Pietermaritzburg alone, through the very middle of the district in which the outrage occurred, and reported that the utmost quietude prevailed. More than this, —he drew up a written statement of his impressions,

at Sir Bartle Frere's request, and forwarded it to him through an officer of the Natal Government. That document, however, did not find its way into any blue-book. And with good reason; for at that very date, the beginning of October, 1878, Sir Bartle Frere was writing despatches describing the state of alarm that existed in the colony.

Who created the alarm? Without doubt, Sir Bartle Frere himself. Who insisted on the despatch of extra reinforcements from England? Sir Bartle Frere, and no one else.

What, then, was the state of mind prevailing among colonists? Their state of mind, previous to the outbreak of the war, was one of the most perfect confidence in Sir Bartle Frere, coupled with the belief that he, above all men in the world, would solve any difficulty that existed with the Zulus by peaceable means, if any peaceable means could by any possibility be found. The presence of the troops—and it must be borne in mind that only the two battalions of the 24th and the 90th, three battalions in all, had been added to the three battalions previously in Natal and the Transvaal—was regarded as a wise measure of precaution, and not as containing the preparations for an invasion of Zululand.[1] So high stood the *prestige* of Sir Bartle Frere's name and reputation, that had he announced his intention of declining to

[1] The 4th and 99th only arrived a very few days before hostilities actually commenced.

resort to the sword, and of setting the example of a just and generous method of dealing with savage races, the whole colony would have cheered him to the echo.

What followed was the natural consequence of this state of feeling. When it was seen that Sir Bartle Frere was determined to go to war, the whole colony took it for granted that there must be some very good reason for it, and, pinning their faith still upon his reputation, approved every step which he took. Weak, perhaps, you will say, but intensely excusable.

Accuse them, then, of preferring Sir Bartle Frere's reputation to their own reason, but of nothing more than this. The war was none of their making; it was made over their heads. So closely was the whole matter kept from them that, although the Natal Legislative Council was holding its sittings into September, nothing was communicated to it on the question of the impending war, nor was any resolution passed expressing apprehension or demanding additional guarantees for security. Nay, more; attempts at inquiry as to what was going forward, and the meaning of the military movements that were visibly taking place, were stifled, by direction from high places, by the official members of the Legislature—men, it must be borne in mind, who were responsible to the Crown, and not to the colonists.

Then there came to be a question of calling out the volunteer forces of the colony, and on this there was but one feeling. The colony must not be back-

ward. The Imperial Government was at last taking an interest in South African affairs. Here were troops ready to protect colonists, if need were, and a High Commissioner who seemed to have the interests of the community at heart. Under such circumstances the colony must not be backward. By rights these boys—for boys the greater part of them were—could only be called on to serve within the limits of the colony, and for defensive purposes. Should they insist on their right? What was defensive warfare? If, for example, the Zulus were massing, or said to be massing, in their own territory for an invasion of Natal, would it not be an act of defensive warfare to cross over and attack them? If the Zulus invaded the colony, and were driven out again, would it not be an act of defensive warfare to follow them up? The question was cunningly put—at whose instance, it were hard to say—and generously answered. There was not a boy among them all who did not sign his name to a declaration expressing his willingness to go beyond the limits of the colony, should the duty be required of them. Alas! they were signing away their lives!

But who anticipated danger? Was it not said of the Zulus, as was the other day said of the Transvaal Boers, that their defence—for the idea of a march to Ulundi became popular during the few weeks preceding the actual commencement of hostilities—was it not said that the defence of the Zulus would

collapse and break down? Did not Sir Theophilus Shepstone himself, when visiting Lord Chelmsford's camp six days before the great disaster, say so? And did any one know more about the Zulus than Sir Theophilus Shepstone? And so, when they marched out of the city, the little troop of some five and forty, with the military band at their head, and the crowd marching with them for a mile of the route, there was anxiety, but no apprehension. They were the Natal Carbineers, the heroes of the affair at Bushman's Pass in 1873. They were going to redeem their reputation, and to fight, if fighting indeed should be necessary, under the eye of Lord Chelmsford himself. On one thing they congratulated themselves—they were not going to fight under Colonel Durnford, whose stubborn adherence to his orders not to fire the first shot brought them loss six years before in the passes of the Drakensberg.

And so they marched out, and we—what did we do who remained at our businesses in town? They must be made comfortable, these boys of ours; they must be able to feel that there are people thinking and caring for them while they were there on the borders of Zululand, taking a manly part in what might be—must be—a crisis of grave import to the colony. For they were not of the commoner sort, these boys. Their families were, in many cases, of the best blood of the colony, who were not ashamed that their sons should serve as privates in the ranks

of the Carbineers. Then Christmas time came, and there must be Christmas dinners sent up to the front. There were meetings, discussions, subscriptions—how vividly these things can be remembered!—division as to whether it was best to send soda-water in bottles ready made, or to furnish the means of making it. The Christmas waggon, with its stores of good things, got to the camp some days too late, but it did not matter. Its contents came in for New-Year's Day, and were appreciated all the same. And then, before a fortnight of January was well passed, there came news of an action. The Buffalo had been crossed; Lord Chelmsford was on Zulu ground; there had been a skirmish, and our boys had behaved well. Of course they had behaved well; every one knew they would. And then came a pause; there was delay in the advance; Pearson was to push on, it was said, along the coast road to Ulundi, and the road seemed by all reports to be clear. The 22d January came and went; a quiet, dull day to those who waited at home, with an eclipse of the sun that was watched through dull overhanging clouds. Then the next day brought news. Pearson had been engaged; the enemy had attacked him in force, and had been driven off after two hours' fighting. That was well; for if the enemy fought, it was said, it would the sooner be over. And so every one with sons or brothers in the field went to bed more cheerful that night, never guessing that even at that moment

there were men galloping towards the city charged with the worst and heaviest news that had ever come to it since the day it was founded—no one guessing that while we were watching that eclipse of the sun a tragedy was being enacted which will never be forgotten as long as Natal has a name.

Does any one in Natal remember—or rather does any one forget—that Friday morning, the 24th January, 1879, when the news came down to the capital of Natal of the dire disaster under the shadow of the hill at Isandhlwana? There never was a calmer, brighter summer dawn than there was in Natal that day. The whole thing is at this moment as distinct as if it were only yesterday. The dim feeling of undefined awe, when it was whispered that news had been brought of the disaster. Then the questions hurriedly asked of the highest colonial official obtainable; the answer, "The news is just as bad as it can be;" the question as to who was known to be killed; the reply again, "Durnford's killed for certain, and Scott, and at least half the Carbineers." Durnford? How did he come to be there? He was supposed to be eighty miles away. But Scott!—the recently-promoted lieutenant of the popular Carbineers; the best singer of a comic song; the best amateur on the stage; the very life of the cricket-field! Scott dead!—it seemed impossible to realise it. But somehow it got realised as the day went on, and as the conviction settled down on everybody

that half of the gallant little band who marched out a few weeks ago would come back no more. And then, as the day wore, came sentences of indignation. How was it Durnford was there? How was it that the Carbineers came to be again, as it would seem, under his command? Had it not been enough that he had led them into danger six years ago?

So ran the tone at the moment, but it changed five months later, when at last—delayed by heaven only knows what reason—a visit was paid by Imperial troops to the field, and the remains of the dead were allowed to tell their own story. Durnford was there indeed, still plainly recognisable, with Scott close beside him, and the boys of the Carbineers lying dead all round. It was they who had made that last rally, in the vain hope of stemming the rush of Zulu warriors, and gaining time for at least more fugitives to escape. Could any one have believed that sun and weather would have so long left distinguishable remains which thus told one of the most pathetic stories ever known? Yet it was so. And can it be doubted that the memories of Bushman's Pass are wiped out by the memories of the day when, in the last moments of existence, the mistake and misunderstanding of years was set right, and the boy fought side by side with the man in the conflict which both knew could only end in death?

Take these things into your mind; think of them well, putting yourself in the place of the Natal

colonist, and see if it is not possible to esteem him a little more, and despise him a little less, even though he is no disciple of Dr. Colenso's. If he is a Jingo, are not many of you good people in England also Jingoes? If, once being engaged in a struggle with native races, he insists on the result of the struggle being left unmistakably in his favour, so that the native races may have no doubt as to who is master, is he not merely copying the example set him from home? Do you good people in England feel much sympathy with politicians of the extreme Cobdenite school, who would give up Malta and Gibraltar, and every other fortress on which the English flag is now flying? Dr. Colenso and those who in South Africa think and work with him are to the British colonist as the givers up of Gibraltar are to you. And they are worse than this; for in the decline of European *prestige* in South Africa the colonist sees imminent and immediate danger to his hearth and home.

Bear with him, then; and do not be severe upon him because he has, during and since the Zulu war, held up both hands in support of Sir Bartle Frere's Zulu policy. The sin is not his, but that of the pro-consul whose reputation would have enabled him to inaugurate in South Africa a policy of peace and moderation, but who, deliberately choosing the lower road, stirred up every base and bitter passion, and threw five millions of Imperial treasure clean into the sea.

CHAPTER XI.[1]

THE REFINED NATIVE.

WHEN, on that fatal day of Isandhlwana, the broken line of fugitives sought the drift over the Buffalo River, which will now for ever be called after their name; when they came down breathless, with the enemy around them and on their heels, doubting whether they had strength enough left to make a last fight for life by plunging into the rapidly running stream; as they paused and looked round and upward, measuring the distance of the advancing foe, and the width of the river that lay between them and the comparative safety of the Natal shore—while they thus paused and wondered, there came the sharp report of rifles from the opposite bank.

Was it a signal of life or of death? Had the Zulus got across and intercepted their retreat, or was there a British detachment providentially in the way, covering their escape?

No, they were not British troops; they were not

[1] The greater part of this chapter appeared in September 1879 in the columns of the *Daily Telegraph*, and is reprinted by the courteous permission of the proprietors of that journal.

even a colonial force. The men whose rifles they heard were as black as the Zulus themselves, but they were not Zulus, for they wore a rough uniform and broad-brimmed hats, and carried their cartridges in a belt over their shoulders. There they stood by their shaggy little ponies, firing steadily across the river at the advancing swarm of Cetywayo's warriors. There was a Zulu down; there was another. There was a check, a pause, a few moments more allowed for a dash into the river, for a struggle to the other side; a hasty climb up to where the little band of sable horsemen, each with only a few cartridges left in his belt, still stood facing the enemy.

There were not many for whom even such a respite as this was obtainable. But none the less admirable was the conduct of the troop of native horse, who, with no European leader left to direct them, thus delayed their own retreat to save what they could of the remnant of the ill-fated force left in Lord Chelmsford's camp.

Who were these men?

They were the Natal Native Horse—a force, some sixty strong, raised by Colonel Durnford from among the residents of the native settlement of Edendale, near Maritzburg. First of all attached to Colonel Durnford's almost purely native command, they accompanied him to Lord Chelmsford's camp, when, on that memorable morning, he was ordered up

from the drift across the Buffalo river to reinforce the detachments left in camp. Taking part in the action that preceded the destruction of the camp and its gallant defenders, they were so far outside the main body of the Zulus as to be able to cut their way through and escape, losing only two or three of their number. Returning to their homes in the first instance, they volunteered immediately again for active service, passing through the whole of the rest of the campaign with the utmost credit.

They are at home again now, and they are going to give a feast to celebrate their safe return. They have invited the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Henry Bulwer, to be present, as well as other people of importance. You have seen the Kafir in his raw condition; come with me to-day and see him as he can be made by education and the adoption of civilised habits. Here is a carriage and a pair of horses, and a celebrated Jehu of the place to engineer them along; and if we are left last on the road it will be somewhat surprising.

Six or seven miles from Maritzburg stands Edendale, generally spoken of as the largest village in South Africa. A village, it is called, but it is certainly a larger place than several that are dignified in Natal by the name of town. The village of Edendale, it should be said, owes its origin to a Mr. Allison, who in former years did good work as a missionary in South Africa. Purchasing a farm of

6000 acres from that very Andries Pretorius whom we saw doing such valiant work against the Zulu regiments, Mr. Allison set about the formation of a native industrial settlement, attracting round him natives who had come under his influence, and over whom he had acquired an ascendancy. He settled in this quiet nook, in the midst of some of the richest country in Natal, and succeeded in his undertaking, as his energy and devotion entitled him to succeed. To-day 4000 out of the original 6000 acres are under cultivation, while the place has become a home of real and permanent native civilisation, which must spread its influence far and wide.

Leaving, however, the arid flats of history, let us endeavour to picture the place and the people as we see them to-day. And what a perfect day it is! The drawback to fine days in South Africa is almost always the utter absence of clouds. Hill and valley and plain lie steeped in one blaze of unbroken light, that lasts from the instant the sun appears above the horizon to the instant of his disappearance. To-day, however, it is different; there is a softness in the air speaking unmistakably of spring, and reminding one of those delicious English April days which seem, by reason of their very beauty, to be suggestive in some way of melancholy. All round the horizon float soft, white, fleecy clouds, never seeming to change their position, yet always expressive of the idea of motion, and casting upon the

surrounding hills shadows that bring out many a line and contour which would have been completely lost under the cloudless glare of a less-favoured day. And yonder, as we open out the valley, lies Edendale. But surely this is not South Africa at all. This is a piece of Yorkshire, and that collection of white houses on the hill-side, some four or five miles off, is one of those manufacturing villages which line the valleys of the Wharfe and the Aire; only the tall chimneys are missing, and, oddly enough, there are some clumps of gum-trees which, at that distance, have all the appearance of chimneys of a dwarf description. Or is it after all a bit of Westmoreland or Derbyshire?

But now the element of human interest comes into play. Drawn up by the roadside is the escort, some fifty strong, waiting for the Lieutenant-Governor. Every man wears a crimson sash over his velveteen shooting-coat. Gray felt hats of the nattiest and newest pattern are the rule, but here and there is a brilliant smoking cap with a gold tassel, while one man, the sergeant-major of the troop, is distinguished by a magnificent sealskin cap. This is Simeon Kambula, son of that faithful old native Elijah Kambula, who fell fighting in Bushman's Pass in 1873, and whose name is recorded, together with the names of three Natal Carbineers, on the monument that stands opposite the Maritzburg post-office. We are saluted with smiles and lifted hats as we

speed by, and soon find ourselves, after splashing through a stream, at the bottom of the main street of the village. All is holiday time here, plainly enough. The flags are flying up yonder in front of the red brick schoolroom that serves also the purposes of a chapel, while the dark-faced villagers sit or stand in groups by the roadside, smiling their welcomes. But these neat built houses, with their galvanised iron roofs and green-painted verandahs, are surely not the residences of natives! They belong, doubtless, to European families who find it to their advantage to settle here. It is not until a veritable black baby is seen peeping out at a window that conviction on the subject is possible, and that the fact is realised that we are in the centre of black civilisation. Here and there, it is true, signs of original Kafir customs and habits are visible. Here is a kraal built up at the back of a neat cottage; here is a mud hovel that might have been transported direct from the wilds of County Galway, but the prevailing atmosphere is one of orderly progress and high respectability. And now, having landed our vehicle in the midst of a little green paddock, already tenanted by half-a-dozen others, we are greeted by the active and energetic Wesleyan pastor, who, in spite of his holiday air and the bouquet in his button-hole, wears an air of anxiety, as well he may, seeing that on his shoulders almost the whole work of administration has devolved. It

is just as well, after all, that we have arrived before Sir Henry Bulwer, as it gives us time to look about us. The schoolroom must be inspected—a room some eighty feet long and forty wide, which we enter by a door at the end. The first thing that strikes the eye, after it has rested on the long table set out with all manner of good things, is the trophy of white Zulu shields at the farther end of the room, just above where the Native Choir is already seated waiting for the proceedings to begin. Round the room, inscribed in gilt letters on coloured calico, are the names of Isandhlwana, Zlobane, Kambula, and Ulundi—the battles in which the men of the Edendale troop have been engaged, while hanging on a nail over the name of Ulundi is the leopard-skin coronet of a Zulu chief slain in that last fight of the campaign. The table for the European guests —and let it be remembered that the givers of the feast are the black fathers of the village—is placed across the end of the room at which we have entered, and is most bountifully supplied.

Who is responsible for the laying and providing of the tables? It is all done in the village by native hands. Even these table-napkins, folded so daintily, and each adorned with a miniature bouquet, have been arranged by the veritable givers of the feast. Outside there is a considerable crowd collecting, and it is reported that the escort is seen to be on the move. Coming out again, the news is

visibly confirmed; for yonder is the long line of horsemen, and the white top of the gubernatorial mule waggon. The chapel bell begins to ring, but unfortunately cannot get up a sufficient rate of speed to be otherwise than funereal, and is, after a few moments, suppressed. It has, however, served its purpose as a signal, for here are the grand ladies of the village coming up the street in a sort of procession, dressed in a manner which would make any sensitive rainbow hide its head in confusion. Yellow satin, green satin, blue satin, maroon satin, such are the colours and such is the material of the gala dresses of the black beauties of Edendale, while their heads are adorned to match with silk handkerchiefs of corresponding or possibly contrasting colours. As for the men—the fathers of the village, the givers of the feast—one feels quite ashamed alongside their irreproachable black suits and tall white hats. That man seated by the roadside in an elbow-chair, who rises and bows so profoundly as each carriage drives up, is one of Chaka's warriors, who has seen the day when the rule of bloodshed desolated the whole of South-Eastern Africa. Look, again, at this short old gentleman in spectacles, with such a characteristic curl in his hat brim, who, standing with his hands behind him, is discussing village politics with all the quiet dignity of a Member of Parliament. Look at—but stay—look at the view behind the schoolroom, which was hidden

from us till we turned to see how the bell-ringing was getting on. Look at that splendid wooded bluff rising at the other side of the valley, stretching away from us for at least a couple of miles. Look where that other slope comes down to meet it, forming a wooded kloof wherein nestles one of those beautiful waterfalls in which Natal abounds; and look where, higher up, closing in the valley, and reaching high up into the sky, the timbered cone of old Zwaartkop makes a background that is Alpine in its suggestiveness, though strangely un-Alpine in its freedom from snow. That view alone is worth coming all the way to see; but now, amid the cheers of the European visitors and the less noisy salutations of the native throng, the Lieutenant-Governor has alighted. The Colonial Secretary is with him, and Sir John Bissett, a quondam Governor of Natal, who looks as hale and well-preserved as ever. There is a general move into the schoolroom, the European guests entering at the end next their table, while the native guests, to the number of some 300 of both sexes, file in by a door at the farther end. A little time is lost in arranging every one in their places. The worthy pastor, supported by Sir Henry Bulwer and General Bissett, is in the chair, with the English visitors, including a goodly proportion of ladies, ranged right and left; while at the native tables the rule of alternation is strictly observed, no two men or two women sitting

together. At the upper end of the centre table sits young Simeon Kambula, with his future bride beside him, a damsel two or three shades lighter than the ordinary run of native women, with a really pretty mouth and expression, and with her hair done up in an immense frisette at the back of her head. She is dressed in a pink and white striped muslin, less pretentious than the satins around her, and all the time keeps jealous guard over Simeon's sealskin cap, nursing it on her knee.

Opposite Simeon is John Zulu, a man whose portrait should be painted. The Zulu type of face strikes one at once. It is just such a serious, good-humoured face as that of the renowned Zulu chief Dabulamanzi, with the addition of the greater intelligence and trustworthiness which a humane religion and a considerable education can give. John Zulu is something of a dandy in his way; his black velveteen coat is irreproachable, so also is his white waistcoat, while the crimson sash over his left shoulder is secured by a triple gold ring on his right hip. Occasionally, it is true, there are incongruities. Yonder dame in blue satin is innocent of either stockings or shoes, for example; but, as a rule, boots are of the best. Simeon's young lady wears a pair which are really enviable, with high heels and drab tops, and not particularly large either. Sometimes, however, it is evident that comfort has been sacrificed to appearances, or else, surely, this jolly-looking fellow,

sitting with his back to Simeon Kambula, would never have slipped off one of his boots under the table, exhibiting a spotless white stocking, which an Englishman might envy.

But grace is to be sung by the choir, who have long had all their books open and ready, and there is a general rising to the feet, followed by a moment's pause. Is this singing to be an infliction or a pleasure? A moment more decides the question. It is not an infliction, at any rate. In perfect tune, and with the utmost precision as to time, the four-part harmony, unaccompanied by any kind of instrument, swells out through the room. What magnificent bass voices, is the next thought. Round and smooth and full, they never seem to assert themselves with undue prominence; while the trebles, a little harsh, perhaps, but always true, are totally unaffected by that lisping nervousness which is so often the bane of amateur choirs at home. The only thing left to be desired is, perhaps, a little more clearness in the pronunciation of the English words. "If any one," remarks a neighbour, "were to take that choir to England, and show them off at Exeter Hall, he would make his fortune." Very possibly; though it is to be hoped no such undesirable lot will befall the simple lads and maidens of Edendale. Several times during the course of the afternoon the choir are called upon, and are invariably listened to with pleasure, and rewarded

with applause. There is a crispness in their singing, and an attention to rests and pauses, which might serve as a most useful example to village choirs of far greater pretensions in England. The system upon which they have been taught is the tonic sol-fa, and the result might most justifiably be quoted as a triumph.

It is now time for the speech-making; and, in spite of the absence of any fluids besides tea and coffee for drinking the Queen's health, this is done with all the honours. "The Health of the Lieutenant-Governor" is followed by Sir Henry Bulwer's speech in reply, short, but thoroughly hearty. He regrets that he cannot say what he has to say to the Edendale men in their own language, and that he must ask the interpreter Jacobus to say it for him; and as the sentences are given one by one, and consequentially translated by the little, stout man in the gray tweed jacket, there is a satisfied silence. Sir Henry desires to say with what pleasure he is present, and how highly he appreciates the good service done by the Edendale men and their gallant conduct in the field. He thanks them, in the name of the Queen, and gives them a hearty welcome home again. He feels sure that as their conduct has been in war so it will be in peace, and that the time and strength they have so willingly given to the Government they will now employ in peaceful occupations, and self-improvement. Their

behaviour has been a credit to Edendale, and a living testimony to the value of their pastor's labours and the success of the mission. The applause at the end of these utterances is hearty and thorough, and presently the pastor rises to reply. It has been agreed,—he says, that all that the Edendale men have done is to be made into writing and put in a book, and he proceeds to state, in few words, what they have done. He recalls the day when they went out into the field, not without having first, at a solemn service in that very room, committed themselves to the protection of God. He refers to the battles they have fought, the dangers to which they have been exposed, until at last the Queen's general gave them permission to return home. He tells his European hearers how, on the day of that return home, the men rode straight to the church and got off their horses, and did not exchange a greeting with a single friend till they had first publicly returned thanks to God for their safe return. They were still ready, should occasion arise, to do service for their Queen and their country.

Hereupon the most enthusiastic applause breaks out, and the pastor sits down, leaving the task of welcoming home the sons of the village, in the name of their fathers and relatives, to the General Superintendent of Wesleyan Missions, who has purposely come out from Maritzburg for the occasion. And

now it comes to the turn of Simeon Kambula, who, leaving his betrothed in sole charge of his sealskin, steps out and confronts a lamblike interpreter, who is called up from the back of the room. Like all Kafirs, he begins with the words, "I have nothing to say;" but it appears, after all, that he has much. In simple, earnest language, the full eloquence of which is scarcely gathered from the English of the interpreter, he describes how their officers have always helped them. It began, he says, at Isandhlwana, when they could not see the way to get out, and their officers showed them. "God bless them for it!" Fighting his battles over again, Simeon speaks of the events of that day; how they went out, at Colonel Durnford's order, to meet the Zulus when they saw them coming; how Durnford at last told them to get into a donga and fire as fast as possible; how he told them, later, that they must die for their Queen; and how they were ready to do so; how they saw their brethren of the 24th with the Zulus all round them, and Durnford told them to get away as quick as they could, because they had no more ammunition; how they shot their way through the Zulus and took some gentlemen upon their horses and took them in to Helpmakaar. Simeon gets a hint at this point that time may be of consequence to some present, and adroitly profits by it, winding up his speech by a touching allusion to the love which they all felt for Colonel

Durnford and for George Shepstone. Some one else, he says, will give an account of the fight at Kambula and at Ulundi. This some one else turns out to be John Gama, who takes us inch by inch over the ground of Zlobane, Kambula, and Ulundi, his interpreter using now and then quaint expressions, which give a better idea of the speaker's meaning than any more finished translation could give. "We went out," he says, "at Ulundi to meet the enemy, and then were told to come inside the fort; and this was not a fort of waggons, it was a bodies' fort. 'We were told to come inside the fort made of the soldiers' bodies, and they opened a way for us to go in, and it was so." The English, says John Gama, are a rock to us. It seems to him that they have two rocks; there is a soul rock, which is God, and an earth rock, which is the English Government, and they rely on one as much as on the other. Can anything be more simply eloquent?

At this point there are loud calls for Captain Shepstone, Theophilus the younger, who rises and bears testimony to the conduct of these Edendale men in the field. He relates how, every morning and every evening, these men, no matter what the weather, sang their hymns, and went through their devotions; how the soldiers who at first came to listen out of mere curiosity stood round in silent respect; how the night before and the night after Ulundi two such sermons were preached by one of

their number to the rest as he had never heard equalled. Is it to be wondered at that the European guests, many of them probably careless enough about their own devotions, cheer him to the echo? And then comes a little bit of a ceremony—a collection is to be made among the villagers, at their own suggestion, as a thank-offering for the safe return of the troop. Part of the sum collected is to go towards paying off a debt on the station, and part in the erection of a monument to the memory of those of their number who have fallen. A basket is passed round the tables. Meantime, a few more speeches are made. The Colonial Secretary speaks, and dwells on the fact that there had not been a particle of self-glorification in any word that had been uttered by any member of the troop. Old Mr. Tarboton, the father of the village, as his black neighbours call him, speaks also, and then it is time to go. Simeon Kambula and John Zulu take leave of the English visitors as they pass out, and many are the white hands that on this day for the first time touch a black. "I never shook hands with a nigger before," says an energetic individual from the city; "but I would shake hands a thousand times over with such fellows as these." Stick to it, my friend, stick to it.

The day has been a day of complete pleasure, without a single jar of any kind, without even so much as a hint of that element of cant which is

unfortunately, so frequently found associated with assemblies of such a character. These men of Edendale are, it is plain, men who, while they are deeply religious both in thought and action, are men who enjoy life; they can fight as well as pray, and cultivate their fields as well as fight. To-day they are honoured citizens of a British colony, capable of holding their own, either politically or commercially, with their European fellow-subjects. Thirty years back the settlement of Edendale was still unfounded, and the fathers of the now rising generation were little better off in any way than the subjects of Cetywayo. This is what can be done with the Natal Kafir when due conditions are observed, and yet there are people who say that the native question in Natal is a hopeless puzzle.

Yet notice this one thing, for it is worth noting. These men have not risen to be what they are through any particular help to rise to it. On the contrary, they have had to experience severe, even if usually passive, opposition. Would you believe it, not one of these men has a vote for any member of the Legislature? They are all still, theoretically, under native law, and being so, are bound to obey the chief of their tribe, whoever he may be. They cannot even be married without going through the ceremony of purchasing a wife for cattle. Surely a strange and startling anomaly this, and one that will and must be made ere long to cease to exist.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TRANSVAAL.

YES, at last we are on our way there! But how are we going?

It is half-past ten on a Tuesday morning, and the space in front of the Post-Office at Maritzburg looks unusually lively. There are groups on the broad steps; groups on the sloping expanse of gravel that stretches down from the foot of the steps to the edge of the street—the street which, being here a piece of the great highway that runs from the port at Durban to the capital of the Transvaal, is, in its passage through Maritzburg, worthily dignified by the title of the Commercial Road. Standing on the Post-Office steps—and the Post-Office, as you know, occupies a part of that pile of public offices which is so creditable to the capital of Natal—we can look down the whole length of the Market Square, where, in older times, the waggons of the Dutch farmers would be outspanned for days together, when they came in with their families to the periodical "Nachtmaal." Times have, however, changed wonderfully during the last few years, and some day before long the greater part of

that "square"—really an oblong, some 400 yards long, and 150 wide—will be laid out in gardens for the beautification of the city. And here, at the nearest end of the square, and just inside the railings across the road, stands the pretty Gothic monument to the memory of the three colonial volunteers, and the two loyal natives, who fell in the affair at the Bushman's Pass in 1873. Note how the inscription speaks of "one cause and one country," thus linking native and European side by side; and note, also, that there is not a colonist, rough though he may be, who sees in that inscription anything inconsistent with his own ideas of things.

But what are we waiting for? We are waiting for the post-cart to start for the Transvaal, and waiting to get our seats in it, so far as a multiplicity of mail-bags will allow us.

And here it comes from the stables, sweeping round the corner of the Police Station yonder at a gallop, with a couple of casual Kafirs hanging on behind, scattering the gravel and the idlers on every side, as Abraham, the half-caste driver, reins up his six rough-looking horses at the Post-Office steps. Not a promising looking vehicle for a journey of some 400 miles, is it? A strong, roughly-built kind of magnified dog-cart, painted yellow once, but splashed and weather-stained till the colour has in many places disappeared, with two seats back to back, each capable of holding three, and with a good wide

space between them. There is no splash-board, so that those on the front seat sit almost over the tails of the two wheelers; but there is a powerful foot-brake, round the lever of which Abraham has temporarily fastened his collection of reins. Over the top there is a canvas tilt, discoloured with innumerable drenchings, and you may, too, see traces of canvas curtains to let down as an additional protection against the weather. The springs are all carefully "served" round with stout twine, the centre, just over the axle, being protected by a stout leather pad; when you bump at full speed into a hole you will understand how necessary this last contrivance is. As for the harness—did I say the horses are rough? Well, then, the harness is rougher. Patched here with strips of hide—what the Dutchman calls "voorslag"—there with string, you marvel how it holds together. Where string has been used once, string can be used again, and Abraham is sure to have an inexhaustible supply in his pocket.

Well, on the whole, not an uncomfortable-looking vehicle, you think. The space between the seats will serve admirably for your luggage, and there is at least room to stretch your legs on the foot-board.

Deceptive hope! For look, the big window under the colonnade of the Post-Office is at last opened, and out at that window are being tumbled, in rapid succession, an apparently interminable succession of

mail-bags. These, as they are thrown out, are seized by two stalwart Post-Office Kafirs, and pitched bodily into the cart. The space between the seats is quickly filled up, and you begin to feel a little uncomfortable. Still the mail-bags come pouring out, and the heap in the cart grows higher and higher. You begin to understand now why you have been so strictly limited in the matter of luggage, and why every pound over the specified weight is jealously charged for. But it seems to become now not so much a matter of your luggage as of yourself, for the mail-bags are overflowing on to the seats and the foot-boards, and there are more yet to come. There, on the foot-board, which seemed to afford room to stretch your legs, a huge sack of newspapers has been secured, and, if you have a back seat, you will have to put your feet either on it or beyond it. As for the interior pyramid, it has very nearly reached the top of the canvas tilt, and it seems only too probable that part of your occupation on the journey will be an effort to keep the pyramid in a safe and normal position.

But there is an end to everything, and there is at last an end to the outflow of letter-bags from the Post-Office window. You are due to start at eleven, and it is a few minutes past that now. So climb up as best you can, and take your seat as best you may, and then—hold on.

Well, after the first wild jolt off the gravel on to the

high road, the sensation is not so unpleasant. The pace at least is good, as we rattle down Commercial Road and across the level valley that has to be traversed before the long and tedious ascent of the Town Hill begins—the Town Hill, that looks from below like a range of mountains, but is really only a step up on to a higher tableland. There is a rise here of 1700 feet in seven miles, and no one will rush his horses at that. So we climb, climb, climb for an hour and more, appreciating, as we see teams of oxen staggering and slipping with their heavy loads, the difficulties of South African transport. Sometimes the road is simply a broad track over the steep green slope, where waggons have had room to choose their own course. Sometimes it is along a cutting scarped out from a hill-side, where we have occasion, as we meet a string of waggons coming down, to thank our stars that Abraham is so accomplished a whip and is so accurately informed as to the exact width of his wheels. There is little enough room to pass, and here at last, in the very narrowest part of the road, the way seems hopelessly blocked. For there is a big wool-laden waggon a-head, with a small Kafir boy, in a jim-crow hat and a cast-off military tunic, holding on to the heads of the leading yoke of oxen, and a coloured driver, in yellow corduroys and with a whip like a salmon-rod in his hand, holding on to the screw-brake at the back. The waggon, which has stopped, is on the very verge of a precipice even now, and yet

there seems anything but room enough for us to pass between it and the rock. The little red-coated "voor-looper" looks at us appealingly as we draw slowly up; an ox, with an unpleasant length of horn, makes a dig, happily without effect, at one of our leaders; while the corduroyed waggon-driver looks round the back of his waggon with gesticulations of encouragement. And his encouragement turns out to be based upon an accurate conception of the facts, for though we have about an inch to spare on one side and two inches on the other, we thread the narrow passage without mishap, and go on our way rejoicing.

Well, the largest hill must be climbed at last, and, taking our last look at Maritzburg, as it lies down in the valley at our very feet, we may hold on as best we can while we rattle down to the crossing of the Umgeni river at Howick, just above where the stream plunges, at a single leap, down the face of a rock three hundred feet high. It is not the gravel that flies about now, or the dust; it is the mud, for there has been rain overnight, and there will be rain again this afternoon. Far away on the left there, amid the tops of those tumbled mountains, there is a cloud forming now under the hot sun, and that cloud will presently, as is the fashion of clouds on summer afternoons in Natal, let us know its business. No need to hurry, for hurrying won't help you; the cloud travels many times faster than your horses can

possibly go. There!—there was a flicker of white lightning under it now, though the distance is far too great as yet for you to hear any thunder. The cloud is rising rapidly, however, throwing out flanking parties on both sides, while its crest grows darker and darker, its shadow deeper and deeper. You can mark its progress exactly as the hill-sides to windward are shut out from view one after another by the gray deluge of rain. And now there is thunder in earnest, following on a flash that seems half-a-dozen flashes in one. Get yourselves as snug as you can, wrap your waterproofs well round you, and make the best of it, for a Natal thunderstorm is no joke. There is the rain coming gray and thick down the bleak hill-side, while the lightning is becoming an incessant blaze, and the thunder an unceasing roar. And now it is on us, and round us, and over us, emptying itself on the tilt of the cart like a water-spout, and sending a fine spray through on to letter bags and passengers. Did you ever see such lightning? There have been six discharges within the last minute, close, as you would say, to the horses' heads, and each discharge at least six flashes in one. It *rains* lightning here, and nothing else. What is this by the road-side? A waggon? Yes, a waggon, covered over with a tarpaulin, and with the driver and "voor-looper" cowering panic-struck beneath it. And well they may, for though they are safe enough, there are nine

out of the sixteen oxen lying dead—killed by a single flash just before we came up. It is an everyday story here in summer time, and what wonder, when you have your oxen yoked at each side of a wire rope?

There is no idling along this road at any rate, and long as the distances are, they are got over in a surprisingly short time, considering the state of the roads. Estcourt has long been passed; Colenso, with the big iron bridge over the Tugela river; Ladysmith, where the road branches off on the left to the Free State. We have climbed the Biggarsberg; we have sighted and passed through Newcastle. We have dashed through the drift across the Ingogo, climbed the hill towards Hatley's, traversed the plateau, and now the road is once more dropping down again into the valley.

Do you know this spot? Is not that rugged height towards the left the Majuba mountain? Is not that ridge over which the road runs in front of us,—is not that Laing's Nek? Is not the deep valley of the Buffalo river down below there on the right? Are there not all round us the graves and the memories of brave men? Is it a question that may still be asked, as it was asked once in the gate of an oriental city, "Who slew all these?"

Life—the individual life of man, woman, or child—is not, as you know, the most precious thing in the world. If it were, there would not have been

men or women who would, at one time or another, have chosen death in preference to some other alternative. There has scarcely been a step forward in the world's history that has not been consecrated by human sacrifice,—sacrifice willingly offered up in their own persons by the few in order that the many might be the happier. You can understand the act of Lucreece, the heroism of the defenders of Thermopylæ, the rallying of the farmers at Lexington court-house, the defence of the passes of Switzerland against the armies that had laid the best part of Europe under contribution. You can understand that in such cases as these life was given up as the price of something better worth having. You can understand, too, that there are cases which are doubtful; cases of which it may be said that if such and such benefits have resulted, then life was not uselessly thrown away. But if there is no doubt, and if the certainty is all the other way, what then? There were brave men, no doubt, who perished in the defeat and destruction of the Spanish Armada. Did their deaths purchase anything worth the sacrifice? If the attempt they were engaged in had been successful, and England had fallen bound hand and foot under the dominion of Spain, would it have been better either for England or for Europe, or for the whole world?

Is it ever better, has it ever been better, for the world, when a people desiring their independence

have been coerced into submission? There is, and can be, only one answer to that question. Yet there can be no doubt that, fighting in such a cause of coercion, many brave men have died. Who slew them? And who slew all these brave men whose graves are scattered round the defile at Laing's Nek?

That is a question which one day history will answer in a far more emphatic manner than any in which it can be answered now. To some it may have seemed an impossibility, a monstrosity, that a nation pluming itself above all things on its independence should seek to coerce into subjection a people equally independent with itself,—monstrous that, at the very first whisper of protest and dissent, there should not have been some effort made at impartial inquiry, to see whether the nation was or was not on the verge of the commission of a crime. Nations, however, have their irrational moments as well as individuals—their times of fever, when they deny all the principles by which they have been accustomed to live, and plunge into deeds the results of which can never be entirely effaced. It was during such a national fever that the annexation of the Transvaal took place, and the brave men whose graves lie scattered round about Laing's Nek are among the victims of that fever. Among the victims, because, as you know only too well, there are victims enough elsewhere—victims whose graves are to be

found scattered up and down the plains and the passes of Afghanistan.

But were there not contributing causes nearer the spot? Was there not mis-government, ill-treatment of native tribes on one hand, and fear of them on the other? This is a matter to be looked into.

About a quarter of a century ago, England was suffering, as regards her colonies, from a cold fit. In 1852 she entered into the Sand River Convention, by which British jurisdiction beyond the Vaal was distinctly given up, and the emigrant farmers encouraged to form their own government. In 1854 England withdrew also from the Orange Free State, leaving it to enjoy an independence which continues to this day.

So complete was the determination to have nothing to do with what went on beyond the Vaal river, that, at the time the Sand River Convention was signed, not only native but missionary interests were given unreservedly into the hands of the Boers. It would be difficult to credit the utter indifference on the part of the British authorities at Cape Town if we had not independent testimony on the subject—the testimony of none other than Dr. Livingstone himself.

In 1852 Dr. Livingstone visited Cape Town previous to starting on that first journey of exploration which made him famous. The whole community was smarting with the remembrance of the events of

the fifth Kafir war, in which the Hottentots had joined the Kafirs. The war was, in fact, then going on, and the animus against both natives, of whom nothing bad enough could be said, and missionaries, who were regarded as the aiders and abettors of natives, was strong beyond all precedent. Livingstone found himself regarded everywhere with dislike and suspicion; it was then that he wrote one of his most desponding letters with regard to the prospects of his family, complaining that, being a missionary, he bore the brand of Cain on his forehead. It was with difficulty that he could get a supply of powder and shot to carry back with him to his station at Kolobeng, while a post-office official, of whom he had complained for the delay of some letters, was encouraged to bring an action against him for defamation of character—an action only settled by the payment of a considerable sum of money.

This state of feeling was abnormal, no doubt; but it shows how complete was the intention of abandonment on the part of the British Government when, by the signing of the Sand River Convention in January 1852, the Vaal river was declared the extremest boundary of British jurisdiction. It shows what was meant when, in answer to a question from the Boers as to what was to be done with the missionaries—the question especially relating to Living stone, who had established himself near the north-

west boundary of the Transvaal—it was declared, either by the Governor himself or on his behalf, that the Boers might do anything they pleased with the missionaries. And they did whatever they pleased. They suspected Livingstone and destroyed his station at Kolobeng, and had it not been for the fame which Livingstone subsequently reaped as an explorer, no one, in all probability, would have heard anything more about the matter.

The cold fit, as by a law of nature, could not continue. To abandon authority, and then seek to resume it, was the natural course of British policy in South Africa. Authority had in this way been resumed over the emigrant Boers both in the Free State and in Natal; the question was actually raised whether those in Natal should not be compelled to return within the limits of the Cape Colony. The resumption of authority over Natal took place sooner and continued unbroken because Natal had a seaport, into the possession of which some other European power might come. It was the dread lest another European power, strong enough to assert itself, should come into possession of the Transvaal through the door of Delagoa Bay, that largely led to the annexation in 1877.

But—let this be noted—the resumption of British authority over the Transvaal was expected some years before it actually took place. The land speculators were at work there long ago, as they were at work in

the Cape Colony before the great Dutch exodus. And as it was their business then to stir up bad blood between the Governor at the Cape and the Dutch subjects of the Crown, to circulate slanders against the latter in the hope of profiting by any quarrel that might arise, so it became their business, as soon as they thought there was a likelihood of the British Government interfering, to get up a great humanity cry against the Boers of the Transvaal. It was precisely the same sort of cry that was got up in the Cape Colony between 1812 and 1815, which led ultimately, as you have seen, to local rebellion and the tragedy at Slaghter's Nek.

Take note of dates, and you will see the position better. The first sign of the cold fit of colonial policy abating occurred in 1868, when Sir Philip Wodehouse took over the Basutos to save them from destruction at the hands of the Free State farmers, with whom they had been for some time at war. Two years later you will find the humanity cry in full swing against the Transvaal Boers, a certain section of Natal colonists, who have ever been dabblers in land speculation, being loudest in crying out for British interference.

Well, no interference took place. Although the accounts of Boer outrages against the native population in the Transvaal came officially before the heads of the Colonial Office—then Lord Kimberley and Lord Brabourne—not a finger was moved by way of

rescue. The cry died out and was utterly forgotten, the land speculator seeing that it was hopeless to attempt to secure British interference by such means. So completely was the cry forgotten, so utterly worthless was it known to be by persons nearest to the spot, that in 1877, when the annexation actually took place, not a whisper of it was heard. True, in 1876, a story was got up about the use of explosive bullets by the Transvaal Boers in their war with Sekukuni; and in the same year Lord Carnarvon addressed a strong remonstrance to President Burgers with regard to the employment of the Swazies as allies. But the slavery outcry had died out so completely that not even a whisper of it was heard in the midst of annexation proceedings a few months later. Can you suppose that this would have been the case if the slavery outcry had been sincere, and the facts on which it was professedly based real?

Realise the existence, then, in and about the Transvaal, of a busy, unscrupulous annexation clique, working for its own sole interests, trying one method of gaining British interference without success, and then falling back on another. Imagine a windfall put in the way of this clique by the coming into power of an ambitious Colonial Secretary like Lord Carnarvon, holding office in a Cabinet inspired with a policy like that of Lord Beaconsfield—imagine these conditions, and you will see that the annexation of the Transvaal had, in 1877, become a matter of

course. Whether the annexation would, even under these conditions, have been justified on the anti-slavery ground put forward some years before for the benefit of a Liberal ministry, may be a matter of doubt. There was, however, no need to put this pretext forward; for, instead of the government of the Boers being inherently inhuman in its treatment of native races, it was all at once found out to be inherently weak, and in danger of being swept away. Never were speculators more favoured by Providence!

But were the land speculators, you ask, at the bottom of the actual act of annexation? Undoubtedly they were. It was they who pushed on Sir Theophilus Shepstone to make full use of his powers, who gave him financial support, and, in one case at any rate, were decorated for their services—to themselves! The fact is known to every person of average intelligence in the Transvaal and Natal, and the names of the principal agents are as well known there as the names of any of Her Majesty's ministers are known in England. If your curiosity should be aroused by this information, and you should take ship to Natal to make inquiries for yourself, and you show this passage to any well-informed Natal colonist, and ask him who is meant, he will name two names instantly. And if you press your inquiries farther, he will not improbably reply with a laugh and a shrug of his shoulders, and request you, as a personal favour, to ask some one

else. Not that, he will explain, he could not tell you if he chose, but Natal is a small place, and he does not care to make enemies.

Go and ask; if you wish to know in whose behalf, apart from that question of fevered national policy which is responsible for so much disaster in Afghanistan as well as South Africa, the brave men whose graves are around Laing's Nek threw their lives away, —go and ask those who know, in Natal and in the Transvaal. Send out your Royal Commission to unearth and expose the whole shameful story, with orders to be turned aside by no blind and no trickery. Instruct them to find out who were Sir Theophilus Shepstone's confidential advisers, and what was their personal relation to himself; who it was that took the financial matters of the Republic in hand, and persuaded the Cape Commercial Bank to stop the credit of the Republican Government; who it was that made use, immediately after the annexation, of a semi-official position, to break into the post-office at Pretoria and open private letters which were interesting to himself as a business man; who it was that advanced money to Sir Theophilus Shepstone for the necessary public expenditure; who it was that prepared financial statements for the inspection of the official sent out from the Colonial Office, so as to make out a case for annexation; examine, in short, into the whole doings of the Natal clique who planned the annexation for their own purposes, and made use of Sir Theophilus

Shepstone to carry their plans into execution, and you will then know better on whose behalf so many hundreds of British soldiers have fired their last shot in front of that entrenchment at Laing's Nek.

It will not, you perhaps say, be worth while to stir up the mud to such an extent, especially in connection with matters some three or four years old. You may please yourself about this, of course. Only, until you have made some inquiry into the matters I have hinted at, do not pretend that you know anything about the causes that led to the annexation of the Transvaal, or of what guarantees are needed in the future for the protection of interests on both sides.

Do not suppose that the Transvaal Boer is faultless. If we want to find a faultless people we shall have to go somewhere outside the limits of the universe as we know it. The fact to be borne in mind is this—that he is at least not guilty in respect of the offences which were alleged in justification of the act of snatching away his independence, or in respect of those which are urged as a reason why his independence should not be restored to him. We have seen him in Cape Town, and we have seen him setting forth on that weary exodus which has resulted in bringing new and immense districts under the plough of civilisation. The stock is the same everywhere, varying, as regards outward appearances, with the surrounding circumstances. There is always the

same love of home concerns; the same recognition of family ties; the same unwillingness to interfere in public matters so long as they work with tolerable smoothness. You will not find the Boer of the Transvaal or the farmer of the Cape Colony pressing eagerly forward to secure a public position. Even in Natal, where the Dutch farmer occupies a sort of intermediate position between the two extremes, only one Dutch representative will be found among the fifteen elected members of the Legislature. He has a prejudice, too, against direct taxation—a prejudice of which, before the annexation of the Transvaal, President Burgers felt the full force. These are weaknesses, perhaps, but hardly faults. But of the two faults which you lay to his charge—the fault of being unable to protect himself, for which you took his independence away, and the fault of being by nature a persecutor of native races, for which you are to-day declaring that his independence is not to be restored to him—of these two faults he is as guiltless as any one under his circumstances could reasonably be. As for his power to protect himself, you see it, and it needs no further demonstration. It was in the day of his weakness that he shattered the Zulu power in that battle on the Bloed River. What do you think would be the fate of a Zulu army invading the Transvaal to-day? As for his relations with the native population, if you are in doubt, do at last as he has often asked you to do.

Instead of giving credit to the slanderous tales of irresponsible people, send out your Royal Commission to inquire.

We are still in front of that position at Laing's Nek. We still seem to hear the rifle shots ringing through the air, to see the wounded carried in, and the white flag sent forward for the burial of the dead. Is this a place, you ask, to parley in? Is it here, in the presence of an army eager to avenge its reverses, of a colonial population dreading, as they say, an era of Dutch ascendancy, that these matters can be spoken of, that concessions can be made, and future conditions talked peaceably over? Yes, here, and nowhere else. For it is only here that you ever realise adequately the mischief that can be done by a few men, who, far removed from that power of popular control which is the safeguard of the great heart of this great empire, play for their own petty and personal ends with interests involving the life and death of thousands. It is only in front of this position that you can realise the strength, whether as your friend or as your foe, of the stubborn race of Dutchmen, children of the Calvinists of the Netherlands and the Huguenots of France, who have by their blood, and their toil, and their sufferings, made a pleasant and peopled land out of what was a few score years ago a waste which the savage and the beast of prey shared between them. It is only here, as you shake hands in solemn friendship over the

graves of brave men, that you can realise the magnitude of the crime from which, by the exercise of a little moral courage, you have been saved.

As for the British colonist, of whom you do not now think so badly as you once did, turn and talk to him, and take him into your confidence. It will pay you to do so in the end, and he is not half so unreasonable as you may think. And he, too, has a right to be heard, for it is he, and not you, who will have to live side by side in the future with the independent Boer.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CURSE OF SOUTH AFRICA.

POSSIBLY you may by this time be beginning to gather some inkling as to what the curse of South Africa is. It is certainly not the Dutchman, for he, as you now know, has been the great pioneer of civilisation everywhere. It is certainly not the Englishman, for he has always added to the solidity of the Dutchman that spirit of enterprise which is necessary for the full development of the resources of any country. Nor is the curse of South Africa the native, who, as you see, is a good fellow enough in his way, and capable of a very marked degree of progress towards that odd construction of railway trains and patent leather boots which we call civilisation. It is not the want of harbours, though these might be better than they are; nor the superfluity, on occasion, of rainfall, though this is sometimes a temporary nuisance. Nor is the curse of South Africa snakes, or hot winds, or tsetse-fly, or horse-sickness among horses, or lung-sickness among oxen, or even the brandy-and-soda consumed in clubhouses and canteens.

No, the curse of South Africa has been and is—the Colonial Office.

I do not suppose that this assertion will have the least effect in arousing the indignation of those eminently respectable persons who preside, *en permanence*, over the affairs of the Colonial Empire, and instruct successive Secretaries and Under Secretaries of State in the performance of their duties. Persons so respectable are far beyond the reach of feeling indignation. Nor do I suppose that it will cause them the least uneasiness or vexation to know that, whereas some things I have said will doubtless be challenged by South African colonists of one shade of opinion or another, the expression of this latest stated conviction will meet with the approval of every colonist from one end of South Africa to the other, no matter whether he be an earnest follower of Dr. Colenso, or an equally earnest advocate of native extermination. The fact, however, is one that respectable gentlemen in Downing Street, as well as the public in England, ought to know. In fact, if the news were to be telegraphed out to South Africa to-morrow that, during the progress of an earthquake in London, the whole Colonial Office, with its political heads and its permanent staff, with all its pigeon-holes, and its red tape, and its blue-books, had disappeared for ever in the depths of an unfathomable chasm, every town in South Africa would be illuminated, and the fatted calf at every out-of-the-way farm-house

slain. "For," it would be said, "now there will be at least a chance of the affairs which are to us of such importance receiving some attention according to their merits, and not merely according to the whimsies of a number of utterly irresponsible people whose highest idea of duty is fulfilled when they condescend to accept their salaries."

But alas! London is not in the latitude of the Azores or the longitude of Lima, and there is therefore little chance of the doom of sudden and total disappearance being shared by Lord Kimberley and his masters. Masters,—because in the Colonial Office, as in Dublin Castle, it is the servants who are the masters, and who work the nominal master according to their own sweet will. And as the number of colonies over which the masters of the Colonial Office exercise any real control is getting smaller and smaller, so it stands to reason that control is concentrated on these in an increasingly effective manner. As more and more colonists become possessed of their own independent institutions, Colonial Office patronage becomes more and more limited as to its extent, and soon, if things go on at their present rate, there will be absolutely no patronage left, and the Colonial Office will simply become a place for the reception and despatch of correspondence after this fashion:—

From His Excellency Sir Benjamin Jones, K.C.M.G., Governor of Tipperiboo, to the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

My Lord—My ministers have passed an Act through both Houses of Legislature declaring the wearing of trousers illegal. Numerous arrests under the provisions of the new Act have already been made, and the greater part of the contents of three tailors' shops have been confiscated.

2. I have not felt justified in withholding the royal assent to the new legislation, but as I am personally placed in a somewhat delicate position, I should be glad of your Lordship's instructions.—I have the honour to be, etc. etc., B. Jones.

From the Secretary of State for the Colonies to His Excellency Sir Benjamin Jones, K.C.M.G., Governor of Tipperiboo.

Sir—I am in receipt of your despatch of the 1st April, stating that your ministers have passed an Act rendering the wearing of trousers illegal.

2. I quite approve the course you have followed. and need only impress upon you the extreme undesirability of the representative of the Crown adopting any line of conduct, either officially or personally, that may seem to conflict with the constitutionally expressed wishes of the majority of Her Majesty's

loyal subjects in that portion of the empire to which your Commission refers.—I am, etc.,

THIMBULLEY.

Some day, no doubt, the time of the Colonial Office will be fitly occupied in the reception and despatch of correspondence of this nature. But in the meantime the Colonial Office is invested with power to do much more than this. And as South Africa is the largest colony, or collection of colonies, left under its control, it is in respect of South Africa that its power is mainly put forth.

But of what particular policy in South Africa, it is asked, do you complain?

I complain because the Colonial Office has no policy whatever, and never had any. If it had only had energy and spirit enough to adopt some distinct line of policy, positively bad or positively good, and stick to it, things would be infinitely better than they are. A positively bad policy would have been better than none at all, for a bad policy would quickly have brought up colonial interests in revolt, and made it a question as to which should go to the wall; and when this state of things came to pass the matter would pass out of the hands of the Colonial Office into the hands of the nation. This is, in fact, what has happened in respect of the Transvaal, where the obstinate refusal to reconsider annexation has brought matters to a crisis, from which they must

take a new departure. A bad policy, I repeat, would be infinitely preferable to no policy at all. What is absolutely destructive of all confidence, all respect, on the part of South African colonists towards the Department of State with which it is their misfortune to have to deal, is the purposeless, colourless, unstable drifting hither and thither; the policy of committal, and reversal, and re-reversal; the policy that one day blows hot and the next day blows cold; that one day makes a new commandment and the next day chastises you for attempting to keep it; a policy the guiding principle of which is the keeping of things quiet, and the main end of which is first to place, and then to pension comfortably, as many officials as the revenue of any unfortunate colony can be made to support, without regard to fitness, or competency, or any other qualification.

Take the wider question first, and look how, in South African history, the policy, or no policy, of the Colonial Office has played mischief with the best interests of the country. It will be said, of course, that, up to within a comparatively recent period the Colonial Office was not a distinct department, the care of matters colonial being merely an appanage of the office of the Secretary of State for War. True, but the same guiding spirit was there. Since the date of the Crimean war, or thereabouts, the affairs of the War Office have been brought more into the light of day, and have in consequence undergone

some degree of reform. The old root, however, was left in the Colonial Office, and has sprouted and borne fruit abundantly.

Go back to the date of that second Kafir war in the Cape Colony, the war of 1818, and note how it was brought about. Lord Charles Somerset, the same official who tried to suppress the first Cape newspaper, was then Governor of the Cape Colony. Acting without inquiry he entered into a treaty with the Kafir chief Ngqika, by which any chief to whose kraal stolen cattle could be traced should be held legally accountable for compensation. Whatever power Ngqika may have had to treat for himself, he had no power whatever to treat for others, as was soon found out. Some cattle that were missing were traced, or said to be traced, to the kraal of a chief named Ndlambe. Ndlambe refusing to make compensation, all the cattle that were in the neighbourhood were indiscriminately seized and driven off by a force of British troops. This rough and ready mode of levying execution upon other people's goods had its natural results. The plundered tribes came down on the unfortunate Ngqika and completely routed his followers in a pitched battle. The Colonial Government felt bound to support Ngqika, and invited him to assist the British troops in an invasion of the territory of his enemies. The invasion was in one respect a success. Some thousands of cattle were seized, a portion of which were be-

stowed upon Ngqika, and the remainder appropriated to the compensation of farmers from whom cattle had been stolen. But the matter did not end there. The Kafirs rallied and invaded the Colony in force. Grahamstown itself was placed in imminent jeopardy, and only after several months of hard fighting, for the purposes of which every colonist was pressed into the field, were the disturbances brought to an end.

That war, the second Kafir war, was therefore the direct result of the mismanagement of an Imperial official.

Go on to the third Kafir war, which broke out at the end of 1834. This war arose out of circumstances almost exactly similar to those that led to the outbreak of the second war. Cattle-stealing—a matter serious enough, but still a matter for police repression, if a police had existed—was again becoming serious, and another Imperial official, Sir Lowry Cole, determined to set on foot once more the system of reprisals—a system conveniently stated in the formula that if some one steals your cattle you steal some one's. The chief Maqoma, a son of Ngqika, was said, or believed, to have given shelter to cattle-stealers, and so it was resolved that his cattle should be seized. Some thousands of Maqoma's cattle were accordingly "lifted;" some were given by way of compensation to those farmers whose cattle had been stolen, and the rest were returned to their lawful

possessor. This good example was followed during the four or five succeeding years, till the Kafirs began to be tired of being robbed, and attacked the parties sent out cattle-raiding. In one of these attacks a chief, the brother of Maqoma, was killed. Thereupon there was general war. Within a fortnight after the death of Maqoma's brother forty farmers had been murdered, upwards of 400 farmhouses burnt, and hundreds of thousands of sheep and cattle carried off. No doubt the natives had provocation, but the provocation came direct from the Imperial officials who themselves invented and encouraged the system of reprisals, and backed up their illegal acts by utterly unjustifiable war.

After such destruction as this there was only one course open. The colonists were compelled to fight for dear life, and succeeded in crushing their enemies. As soon as the war had begun, its perils and its results were unmistakable. And then, on the conclusion of the struggle, came Lord Glenelg's dispatch censuring the colonial Government, which was right enough, for the colonial Government was responsible for all the steps that had led up to the existing condition of things; censuring the colonists, which was entirely wrong, for not only were they not responsible for what had passed, but they had also been the chief sufferers.

Blowing hot one day, as you see, blowing cold the next. Presently it became time to blow hot once

more, and then, as must ever be the case, the Kafirs became the chief sufferers through the censure pronounced against colonists on their behalf. Another war broke out over a very trivial matter in 1846. There was the usual initial disaster, the usual delay, the usual revenge, in the midst of which Sir Harry Smith was sent out with new powers to annex, which he immediately exercised by annexing the whole of the native territory in the eastern districts of the Cape Colony as far as the Kei.

Then it became time to blow cold again. The troops were withdrawn from the frontier, and four military villages, the inhabitants of which consisted of old soldiers, were planted with the view of securing peace. The Government might as well have planted matches in gunpowder. The British soldier is useless enough in the field against Kafirs; plant him in close contiguity to the Kafir in his ordinary life, and he soon begins to find ground of quarrel. Some of the military villagers, acting under the mistaken idea that they were searching for treasure, violated and plundered the grave of a Kafir chief. The Kafirs avenged the insult by a massacre, in which forty-seven of the residents in the military villages were killed, the women and children being allowed to escape uninjured. The massacre led to another war—the fifth Kafir war, and the most formidable that had yet taken place, breaking out at Christmas 1850, and not being concluded till March 1853.

Every one of these wars was made by officials possessing full control over the policy of the colony, and responsible to the Colonial Office alone. If the majority of these officials—for example, Sir Harry Smith, Sir George Cathcart, and others—were military officers, that was only the natural result of the placing of the colonial and military departments at home under one head. But in the meantime other instances of the hot and cold policy had been taking place. The Dutch emigrants had been allowed to leave the colony, and had been pursued. Natal had been claimed, given up, claimed again. The Free State had been annexed by a Cape Colony judge, the annexation repudiated by a Cape Colony governor, conquered by a British general, thrown off again to shift on itself. Missionaries had been one day belauded and helped, another day given over unreservedly into the hands of those who were, on political grounds, their bitterest enemies. The history of the government of the Cape Colony, from the date of the formal cession by the King of the Netherlands up to within the last few years, is the history of an unbroken succession of blunders; and for all these blunders, not the colonists and settlers, but the imperial officials sent out from England, were directly responsible.

Am I right in saying that, up to that date at least, the curse of South Africa was the imperial policy, or no policy, emanating from the Colonial Office?

And now look at what has happened since then.

Between the years 1854 and 1872 the Cape Colony was possessed of a government which, though not altogether consistent or perfect, worked well enough for all practical purposes. There was the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council, and the Executive, headed by the Governor. Except for the fact that there were two Chambers of Legislature instead of one, the constitution was much like that at present existing in Natal. The general policy originated with the Executive, who held their offices permanently from the Crown; while the popular Assembly had control of expenditure and general legislation. It was determined in England that the colony should be made altogether to govern itself, and Sir Henry Barkly was sent out to carry the decree into force. No one particularly wanted responsible government; but the thing had to be done, and it was done. Without a word or a thought, the whole native population of the colony, then considerably more numerous than it is now, was turned over by the Colonial Office to the tender mercies of the colonists. No trouble was taken to explain to them—no, not even to the Basutos—their altered position. Why no trouble was taken you know. Lord Kimberley, who was then Secretary of State for the Colonies, knew and cared nothing about them; and Sir Henry Barkly had "no instructions" on the subject. The idea was to shake off all responsibility in South Africa, and, no matter what the detriment to existing interests, the thing had to be done.

Then a little later Lord Carnarvon stepped into Lord Kimberley's place, on the same principle, it may be supposed, as that on which, when you are placing your men in the field at cricket, you put the most useless man in the eleven at short leg. No sooner was Lord Carnarvon in office than he began upon another tack altogether. The idea was now to get back part of the control over native interests under the grand scheme of confederation—to provide that while the Colonial Government should pay the piper, the Imperial Government should call the tune. A system of intermeddling in the affairs of every South African community was forthwith commenced. Mr. Froude was sent to the Cape Colony; Sir Garnet Wolseley—for this among other purposes—to Natal; Sir George Colley to the Transvaal; Colonel W. F. Butler—he of the "Great Lone Land" and not he of Geok Tepé fame—was sent to the Free State. The strings were being pulled in all directions. Sir Bartle Frere received a special engagement to do the leading part in the great comedy, as it was to be, the tragedy as it has turned out. The Transvaal was annexed; Natal was cajoled; the Free State was threatened. And all this confounding and confusing of things to please—whom? To please the permanent heads of the Colonial Office, who saw that Lord Carnarvon would be pleased if, at his dull post at short leg, he could make a brilliant catch, and play a small second fiddle to the

mightier Imperialism of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury.

It was in the following of this plan that Sir Bartle Frere, when the sixth Kafir war broke out under his auspices on the Eastern Frontier of the Cape Colony, in 1877, insisted, in the face of the opposition of his ministers, the men of the Molteno Cabinet, on sending for more troops to England. Of course every one knows now why Sir Bartle Frere wanted the extra regiments, for he was then, a good twelve months before his ultimatum was despatched to Cetywayo, planning with Lord Chelmsford the invasion of Zululand. And it cannot have been particularly soothing to his feelings when his special enemy, the honourable member for Namaqualand, forwarded him a ministerial minute suggesting that the troops, having arrived off the coast, might be sent to any part of Her Majesty's dominions where their presence was required.

Then there was a hot fit on in the Colonial Office with a vengeance — Imperial troops being forced on colonists who did not want them. And now the cold fit! Colonists informed that under no circumstances will Imperial troops be allowed to assist them in their struggles, whether aggressive or defensive, with native tribes,— colonists declaring they will ask help from anywhere except from the Imperial Government,—colonists sending to ask for the assistance of a contingent of Zulus, rather than

let it be said that they have stooped to ask a favour of the Government to which they owe allegiance!

Can any one expect any respect to attend on a Department that thus zig-zags backwards and forwards? Can any one wonder that the very name of the Colonial Office stinks in the nostrils of South African colonists?

But now look what the Colonial Office has done elsewhere. Look at the filching—"jumping," as the diamond-digger would call it—of the Kimberley diamond-fields, as lawful a piece of the territory of the Orange Free State as any territory could be. It was Lord Kimberley who was responsible for that little piece of annexation, and it is quite fitting that his name should be perpetuated in connection with it. It is Lord Kimberley who is responsible for Sir William Lanyon's presence in South Africa in a political capacity, though it was Lord Carnarvon who paid to the Orange Free State the price of the annexation of the diamond-fields, and who trusted Sir William Lanyon—then Major Lanyon—with the care of affairs in the annexed district. Why, nobody knows.

Look at the jobs which the Colonial Office has perpetrated in the Transvaal; look at the class and character of the people whom it sends there to represent the Imperial authority. Mr. Joubert has complained that they, the Dutch, have been treated in their own country like dogs. The statement is perfectly true. The stories that could be told of

official life in Pretoria during the last year or two, would hardly be credited in England. The rule that has prevailed there has been an exact reproduction of the rule that prevailed over the Cape Colony in the old bad days, when, as I have said, the governing class lived by themselves on the Cape Town peninsula, and the governed lived by themselves on the mainland. What do you think of a Governor—an Administrator, if you like to call him so—who made the gossip of a drawing-room the subject of an official inquiry, and dragged a lady's name into an official dispute? What do you think of an administrator, who, because one or two junior clerks in the Civil Service blackened their faces at an amateur entertainment, issued a public order forbidding Civil Service clerks to take part in any entertainments in future? Small things, you will say, but still straws. As for Sir William Lanyon's general capacity, or incapacity, it stands out clearly enough in every line of his despatches. Yet this is the class of men, who to this day—for I have seen no sign as yet to the contrary—possess the unlimited confidence of the Colonial Office, whose word will be taken without question or inquiry in respect of every public matter that may arise, who receive decorations, advancement, pensions. And it has been men of this stamp, who, regarding themselves as a sort of anointed class, have sneered down the independent yet patient spirit of a whole nation of Dutchmen. It has been by

men of this class that the Dutch, the real possessors of the Transvaal, have been scoffed at, vilified, trampled on, till even Dutch patience could bear it no longer, and an appeal was made to the sword.

Look again in Natal. Look at the native system which the Colonial Office has for years insisted on preserving there, in spite of the complaints of colonists, who saw that it was every year becoming more prejudicial to the interests of the colony and of the natives themselves. The system has been one of simple recognised and chartered sensualism and slavery—a system under which all native vices have been confirmed, and all native virtues suppressed; a system which encourages the formation of harems by the older and richer men, the indulgence in a sanctioned immorality by the younger, the undermining of all native female virtue, the conversion of a man's daughters into chattels for sale. That is what your Colonial Office, to save itself trouble, and to keep things quiet and pleasant in their official pigeon-holes, does with the native population of Natal. As for the European population—that Dutch population which lives in quietude on its farms, that English population which has made Durban the most rising town in South Africa, which has planned and paid for railways, undertaken harbour improvements, kept up the roads, built bridges,—as for this European population, the aim of the Colonial Office is to subject it to every possible

annoyance and mortification by which small people in power like to display their authority. Do you know that a colony governed as Natal is governed, by an Executive responsible only to the Crown, cannot purchase so much as a cartridge or a ten-penny nail, except with the consent of the Colonial Office, except from the parties to whom the Colonial Office, represented by the Crown Agents, deign to give the order? I said something a chapter or two back with regard to the interference of the Colonial Office in the details of Natal railway management. For years and years Natal implored, begged, prayed, the Colonial Office to allow her to make a start with her railways. Resolution after resolution was passed by the Legislative Council; scheme after scheme, some workable, some not, was taken up and urged on the attention of the powers that in Downing Street be. Simple and stubborn refusal was all the answer that could be obtained. At last, after these repeated refusals, consent was given. A contract ready drawn up between the Crown Agents and certain railway contractors was, so to speak, thrown across to the colonists. "These kind gentlemen," they were told, "are prepared to construct these railways for you on these terms. The price is high, it is true, but you must take this or get nothing." Of course the colony took it, and—has paid for it. But whether the contract was entered into by the Crown Agents

for the benefit of the colonists or for the benefit of the contractors is a question about which some not ill-informed persons have their doubts. Even when the colony was allowed to have its railway, it was not allowed to have the means to work it properly. When the works were approaching completion, an order, put in the strictest red-tape form, was sent home for additional locomotives. The Colonial Office, however, thought that a railway could be worked without locomotives, and simply refused to fulfil the order. Nor is it only in respect of railway matters that such miserable and petty interference is allowed to rule everything. Here is one very typical case. The gaols of the colony of Natal were in bad repair—in fact, new gaols were urgently wanted to keep pace with the growing conditions of the community. A sharp despatch was sent out urging the immediate expenditure of a considerable sum upon these very necessary matters. The colony, not unwillingly, obeyed, and passed a law empowering the raising of a loan for the purposes mentioned. What was the result? The necessary sanction to the proposed loan was withheld, and the colony censured for daring to be so extravagant as to wish to spend money at all.

These things, you will say, are all small-beer chronicles. Perhaps, but then they are part of a system, and as long as that system exists—as long as the Colonial Office has power to play with public interests in colonies for the gratification of small personal ends at home, so long colonial policy everywhere,

and in South Africa especially, will remain a source of continual mischief and perpetuated misery. The Colonial Office stands ever, in small things as well as great, between the English citizen abroad and the English citizen at home. It constitutes an utterly impassable wall through which no whisper can be heard, from those who are surely best able to understand them, of the concerns of important outlying parts of the empire. Whoever in a colony is sealed with the seal of the Colonial Office is infallible; whoever is not so sealed is Nehushtan. Personal favour, personal prejudice, personal pique, are the three guiding principles that preside over colonial destinies, wherever, that is to say, colonial destinies have not been fortunately taken possession of by those who are most concerned in them. When those who are more helpless become troublesome, there is an easy way of dealing with them, in South Africa at least. They are astutely gibbeted as oppressors of the native, and the whole country is down on them at once. They are, in fact, "naboth'd" as effectually as ever was the poor Pondo chief Umquikela.

Is it possible that such a condition of things can be inquired into, publicly exposed, changed? It is hard to be hopeful. Red tape always dies hard, and vested interests die harder. A little moral dynamite is what is wanted, and then———

Then let the Colonial Office sink—or shall we say ascend?—to its proper level as a department for the receipt and despatch of interesting correspondence.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONFEDERATION.

A WORD that may be printed in letters of blood. And yet, as Goldsmith said of Malagrida, Lord Carnarvon is a very good sort of man.

If any one wanted a good illustration of the utter and complete ignorance that prevails in England with respect to South African affairs, he could hardly do better than study the use that has been made of this unhappy word by the English press in discussing them. Only the other day, for example, the *Spectator*, in kindly noticing an effort of mine to throw some light on South African affairs in the pages of the *Fortnightly Review*, complained that I did not explain why South African colonists would not accept Confederation.

The reason for this omission may be stated very briefly. It was this—because, regarding South African affairs from a South African point of view, the scheme of Confederation is absolutely beyond the limits of practical politics—as much beyond their limits as a scheme for an Anglo-Saxon Confederation, which should include both England and the United

States, is as yet outside the limits of practical politics in England.

If some larger Lord Carnarvon should suddenly awake somewhere to the desirability of bringing about an Anglo-Saxon Confederation, and should draw up a scheme—or rather steal a scheme ready made from somewhere else—and send it down to Great Britain and the United States, and the people in those two great countries should, just by way of civility, look at it, and talk about it, and turn away their heads to laugh at it, and finally roll it gently into the sea and leave it there; and if a larger *Spectator*, anxious always to do what is best, should ask why the people in these two great countries did not accept the scheme of the larger Lord Carnarvon, do you know what the answer would be? "My dear good Lord Carnarvon," the people of these two great countries would say, "my dear good *Spectator*, the truth is your scheme is utterly and entirely in the air. We grant that such a thing, if brought about in some way, might some day be very beautiful and highly desirable. But in the meantime we each have our own practical interests, and our own practical difficulties, and there are a score of questions to be dealt with and settled before we can tackle this one. We are very much indebted to you for your solicitude; we are quite willing, as a matter of civility, to talk to you about your marvellous though not original scheme. At the same time, when you have quite

done talking about it, we shall be obliged, for we have all of us practical business to attend to, and our time is somewhat limited."

That is exactly the manner in which Confederation has been regarded by Colonial Legislatures in South Africa. Out of politeness to Lord Carnarvon, they have looked at it and talked about it, and expressed themselves on some occasions as if not unwilling to adopt it. But the whole thing has been completely outside the limits of practical colonial politics, and no one had ever the least intention of seriously adopting, though they have seemed to be seriously considering, the proposition made to them.

That is the reason Confederation has never been accepted—because it never seemed a matter which could really be seriously discussed. The proposals made met no difficulty that had been felt in South Africa, and promised no relief from any recognised grievance. And so far from clearing up any knot of vexed colonial politics, it threatened rather to involve everything in inextricable confusion. And yet in England it has been spoken of by all parties as a sort of heaven-sent policy, placed in the hands of a beneficent Government for the purpose of warding off every possible colonial difficulty, and placing the colonist back in the self-same position as he occupied when he, or his forefathers, sailed from Europe.

And yet Lord Carnarvon is a very good sort of man. He had sufficient discernment to admire the

complicated machinery which the Canadians had invented for the purpose of governing themselves, with its Dominion government, and its provincial government, its governors and lieutenant-governors, its questions for provincial and its questions for Dominion legislation. And he thought it no harm to adopt this machinery just as it stood, even down to the numbering and arrangement of the sections and sub-sections, and present it to the astonished South Africans as a god to go before them. It was as if your tailor should say—"Here is a coat; I did not make it, but I stole it ready-made out of a railway cloak-room. I don't know whether you want a coat or not; but you will be kind enough to put this on, and fit yourself to it. If it should happen to be too long in the sleeves, or ridiculously short in the back, I may be able to shift a button a few inches, and I am at least unalterably determined that my name shall be stamped on the loop you hang it up by." And so was Lord Carnarvon determined that whatever else happened, the supreme Imperial official under the new order of things should be called a governor-general, and have a salary of £10,000 a-year. Having settled this, everything else ought to have been easy.

Unfortunately it was not easy, and one of the greatest initial difficulties arose from this—that two of the States that were to be confederated, that is, the Orange Free State and the Transvaal Republic, were not British States at all, but independent.

Poor Lord Carnarvon! his troubles began very early. He sent out a despatch to the Cape by one steamer, and Mr. Froude by the next. He requested that the despatch might be published, and it was. He did not request that Mr. Froude might be practically sent to Coventry by the members of the Cape Ministry; yet this happened also.

The Africanders are, as I have said, a stubborn race. They had been granted a popular form of government, and they not only thoroughly understood their rights, but were resolved to maintain them. "We," said Mr. Molteno and his colleagues, "are responsible to the constituencies, and with us all measures ought to originate. This proposal for a conference to consider confederation ought to have originated with us, and we are not going to part with our rights for the best Secretary of State that ever breathed."

Were they right or wrong? If you consider what happened afterwards, I think you will say they were right.

Lord Carnarvon, however, would not give up his conference. It was clear he could not hold it in Cape Town. Mr. Froude went on a progress through the country, coming into curious sympathy with the two most opposite kinds of people in the world; getting indignant over the stories of Dutch wrongs told by Western Province farmers, getting enthusiastic over the prospects of the Eastern Province merchants. But it was all in vain. Still, Lord Carnarvon would

not give up his conference. He would have it in London. Surely in London he would be able to beguile the heart of the Cape Premier if he only once got him there.

As the Cape would not send a representative, and as there was no other British colony except Natal, it was on Natal that Lord Carnarvon concentrated his smiles. One official and two unofficial members of the Legislative Council, he suggested, might be sent to London to represent the Colony. Of course there was only one official member that could be thought of, and that was Sir (then plain Mr.) Theophilus Shepstone. The two unofficial representatives were the two senior members for the two leading towns—Mr. Akerman, now the Speaker of the Natal Legislative Council, and Mr. Robinson, proprietor of that enterprising newspaper the *Natal Mercury*, of which I have already told you. How the hearts of the Natal speculators—the men who had their little land jobs in the Transvaal—leaped within them when they saw the deputation set forth! How they sharpened their ears to catch any whisper of what they guessed might be coming!

Did the conference meet? Yes, the conference met. Mr. Molteno was in London, on his own business perhaps,—perhaps on some indirect invitation from Lord Carnarvon; who knows? Did Mr. Molteno come to the conference? No, he did not. Fancy the obstinacy of the man! He, a colonist, in London,

and a peer of the realm and cabinet minister begging, praying, almost going down on his knees to get this colonist to come to his conference, and the colonist bluntly refusing to have anything whatever to do with it.

Who else was in London? Mr. Brand, the President of the Free State, was also in London, having gone there to settle the little matter of the "jumping" of the diamond-fields. Did Mr. Brand go to the conference? No, he too would have nothing whatever to say to it.

But the conference met? Yes, the conference met. And who do you think were there? Sir Garnet Wolseley, Mr. Froude, and Sir Theophilus Shepstone, sitting and talking big at one end of the table, and the two unofficial representatives from Natal sitting humbly at the other end, not allowed—at least not till they insisted on it—so much as to speak. Wasn't this a curious combination? Who Mr. Froude and Sir Garnet Wolseley represented no one quite knows; but there can be no doubt that Sir Theophilus Shepstone represented the Transvaal. For—and here is the oddest thing of all—it was just at this providential moment, when Sir Theophilus Shepstone was in London, and in a position to receive verbal and confidential instructions, that news came from the Transvaal of the failure of the attack on Sekukuni. And straightway Mr. Shepstone rose up and was knighted, and was sent out to South Africa again

post-haste as Sir Theophilus Shepstone, to do what Lord Carnarvon in London, and the land speculators in Natal, desired.

And the two unofficial members from Natal? No one much cared what became of them. They were told that if they wanted something to do they might go and discuss the terms of a mail-contract with Mr. Donald Currie, which they did. In the meantime Lord Carnarvon drew up—no, copied out—his famous South Africa Bill, without once asking for so much as an expression of opinion from the two members of the Natal Legislature who had travelled 7000 miles to discuss Confederation. And that was Lord Carnarvon's idea of the best manner of introducing a popular form of Government all over South Africa.

And yet Lord Carnarvon is a very good sort of man.

Then the plot thickened, and the great pro-consul was sent out, in a new ship with an Imperial name, to set everything exactly as it should be. Landing at Cape Town amid thunders of applause and rumours of annexation, he was regarded as essentially a messenger of peace. The colonial Jingo trembled, and doubted whether it would not be best for him to confess his deeds and burn his books. But on second thoughts he waited, and, from his own point of view, he was wise to do so. For, in the name and for the sake of Confederation, South Africa was soon to be turned into an Aceldama, and the Jingo, whom it

was believed the great pro-consul was sent to curse, was to be blessed altogether.

Three things had to be done, it was shortly found or believed, to make this odd-shaped coat of Confederation fit the South African back. The obstinately independent Cape Premier and his colleagues had to be got rid of; the Zulus had to be destroyed; and the people of the Transvaal had to be persuaded, cajoled, or, in the last resort, bombarded, into accepting the act of annexation. And for all these things the pro-consul was, or deemed himself to be, sufficient.

How the obstinate Cape Premier, who declined to obey orders in asking for more troops from England, was disposed of, I have already hinted. Here the imprudence of his lieutenant, the honourable member for Namaqualand, was a perfect God-send to the great pro-consul, who found himself thus supplied with a dozen good reasons for his *coup d'état*. The obstinate Ministry went, and a Ministry installed, which made it its business to register the great pro-consul's decrees. It was a singular thing, however, that the head of the new Ministry, the same Mr. Sprigg who informed the Basutos that he was "Master of the Colony," was, when thus called away from his sheep-folds to be Sir Bartle Frere's chosen servant, a recognised opponent of Confederation. In the space of five weeks he was its most enthusiastic advocate.

So far things had gone well, and there was already opportunity to put at least one of the principles of

Confederation in force. Had it not been laid down by Lord Carnarvon, in his very earliest despatches, that one of the results of Confederation was to be the establishment of a uniform native policy all over South Africa? That uniform native policy Sir Bartle Frere proceeded to put in force; it was simple, and on the whole effective. The native was declared to be the natural enemy of the European; and, being the natural enemy of the European, of course there was only one thing to be done with him. He must be made to know his place. Every native chief must have his power and influence destroyed, thoroughly and for ever; every native must surrender whatever arms he possessed, and place himself at the disposal of the European, who had been declared his natural enemy. As for the Zulus, there was a double reason for subjecting them. In the first place, they were natives; in the next place, they had an old-standing dispute with the Transvaal. If Sir John Cradock, in 1812, tried to please the Boer of the Cape Colony by forcibly apprenticing Hottentot children, why should not Sir Bartle Frere, in 1878, try to please the Boer of the Transvaal by picking a quarrel with the Zulu king? What the experiment cost, you know; how far it succeeded you can judge when you consider the fact that the "Balmoral Castle," which started on her first voyage from Dartmouth in March 1877, with Sir Bartle Frere on board, sailed again from Dartmouth, in March 1881, with Sir Frederick Roberts

on board, despatched on a mission of destroying these Transvaal Boers whom Sir Bartle Frere's slaughter of the Zulus had failed to pacify.

Will the peaceful *Spectator* again ask why the colonists of South Africa have not accepted Confederation? Surely, at any rate, here are reasons enough to prevent any honest and humane people in England wishing them to do so. The word is steeped in blood and violence, and all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten it. This is the result of Lord Carnarvon's day-dreaming over Canadian Acts of Parliament; and yet there can be no doubt that Lord Carnarvon is a very good sort of man.

But there must be, you will say, more than a mere sentimental reason for the refusal to confederate. If the matter is as yet outside the limits of practical politics in South Africa, why is it thus outside? If the exact scheme proposed by Lord Carnarvon is not a suitable one, is there nothing in the principle of South African union? Are there no natural tendencies in such a direction?

That is a different question altogether, and we will come to it directly. In the meantime it is worth while to note the causes that led to the final overthrow of the Carnarvon confederation scheme—a final overthrow which occurred when, in June last, Mr. Sprigg, the head of the Cape Ministry, withdrew the question from the consideration of the Cape House of Assembly. Mr. Sprigg withdrew the resolutions

he had brought forward because he saw that if he pressed them he would be defeated; and the reason for this was that the whole of the Dutch members of the House of Assembly, influenced by their friends in the Transvaal, had determined to vote with the Opposition. Why the Dutch of the Transvaal thus used their influence is very easily explained. The proposal brought forward was for the summoning of a Confederation Conference—Lord Carnarvon's dish served up again, you see—in which the interests of the Transvaal were to be represented by three delegates nominated by the British Government at Pretoria. The matter would, therefore, have been discussed without the smallest account being taken of the interests of the Dutch population—a course which that Dutch population could by no means suffer or allow. Hence their opposition through their friends in the Cape House of Assembly. And hence, as will be clearly seen, the annexation of the Transvaal, which was expected to do such wonders in accelerating Confederation, turned out to be the very thing that, when it came to the final pinch, crushed the scheme for ever. The South Africa Act, commonly called the South African Confederation Act, passed in 1877 amid the disorder of Irish obstruction, was passed for five years only, and expires in 1882. And when it expires there will be no one—not even, I imagine, Lord Carnarvon himself—to give it the honours of burial.

The reason, then, why Confederation was finally rejected is clear enough. Regarding the question in its more general aspect, is there nothing reasonable in a scheme for South African union? Are there no tendencies already pointing in that direction?

There is undoubtedly much that is reasonable in the suggestion of South African union; there are undoubtedly tendencies pointing in that direction. The question may, indeed, come to be whether these tendencies may not need rather checking than strengthening. If, for example, the Transvaal and the Free State should agree to become one inland independent Republic, and if the western Province of the Cape Colony in a year or two joined itself to the Republic thus formed, you would have a united body of Dutchmen whose influence would be almost too much for you. You may, therefore, presently find yourself engaged rather in checking than in promoting union. That a Dutch State thus formed would be self-governing there can be no doubt. It would be likely to govern itself a great deal too freely and completely. That, indeed, would always have been the risk in the kind of Confederation which Lord Carnarvon wished to bring about. The Dutch element would have so far dominated in the united Parliament that British interests would have stood in some danger of being pushed aside. Lord Carnarvon, it is to be supposed, overlooked this very important fact, or he would hardly have used so

many persuasions to induce Mr. Brand to be present at the Confederation Conference of 1876.

Let us suppose, however, that union is desired, what are the reasons why it is desirable? Two reasons are frequently assigned by writers in England. You will, for instance, find the *Times* continually talking about the necessity of union for the purposes of defence, and of the desirability of inaugurating a common native policy—though not necessarily of Sir Bartle Frere's stamp—throughout South Africa.

Now that common native policy is exactly what you do not want throughout South Africa—unless, indeed, you are going to regard the native as the European's natural enemy, and determine to shoot him wherever found. You do not want that common native policy in South Africa, simply because there are in South Africa native tribes occupying the most utterly dissimilar positions—whose traditions and history are clear and distinct in themselves, and bear not the smallest relationship to each other. How could it be possible, for instance, to treat the independent Pondos, living in their own territory under their own chief, in the same manner as you treat the refugee Zulus in Natal? How are you going to treat either of them as you would treat the Basutos? Are you to take your most civilised tribe for the measure of your uniform policy, or your least civilised? If you take the most civilised as your measure, you clearly give other tribes too much. If you take the

least civilised tribe, you give other tribes too little. You do not aim at a successful Government of white people by ignoring their history and their surroundings, and why should you imagine that you can govern black people successfully by ignoring the conditions under which they live and have lived? The South African native is not merely a black man, who may be lumped together with any other black men. It is only through your ignorance of the subject that you can fall into such an error. Imagine treating a Natal Basuto in the same manner as you would treat a Baca, or a Fingo in the same manner as you would treat a Griqua. Why, one of the most troublesome little revolts that has occurred in South Africa during the last three years arose in a large degree out of this very thing—sending a magistrate who had been accustomed to Fingoes, to exercise supreme dominion over Griquas.

If, therefore, you regard Confederation, or Union, as a good thing, because it will enable you to inaugurate a uniform native policy, you must not be disappointed to be told that it is for that very reason—supposing such a reason to be associated with it—a bad thing. Instead of treating all natives alike, your truest course towards a satisfactory solution of the native question would be to find out as far as you can what treatment suits each tribe best, and to see that, subject to such modification as may be necessary from time to time, that line of treatment

is followed. Native policy is not the rough and ready thing that you think it is. Of course, if you want to save trouble, and to seem to produce some immediate result, you may imitate Sir Bartle Frere. You may classify all natives together as natural enemies of the European, and consider your case proved if he ventures to differ from you. But I hardly think you will find this a satisfactory course in the end.

"But Confederation, or Union, if you like it better, will render the South African colonies better able to defend themselves, and save them from relying in all emergencies on the aid of Imperial troops."

Now, let us look at the various wars—and there have been plenty of them—that have occurred during the last four years, and see how far this assertion of yours holds good.

In the Cape Frontier War of 1877-78, a large body of volunteers was sent from the Diamond Fields and rendered most efficient service.

The war with the Baphuti Chief, Moirosi, was carried on purely with colonial forces.

During the Zulu war a very valuable body of irregular horse was employed, every man of which came from the Cape Colony. The same body of men were employed also in the Sekukumi war.

During the present troubles of the Cape Government in Basutoland and in the Transkeian districts, very valuable help has been rendered not only from Natal but from the Transvaal also.

So that, so far as the mere principle of the matter is concerned, it will be seen that help under difficulties is already exchanged by the South African communities, notwithstanding often their great distance from each other, and their comparatively thin population. Union, if it took place to-morrow, would certainly not make these distances less, nor, at the moment, would it make the population greater; and all help exchanged over such distances as you get in South Africa must needs be limited. You cannot take the whole population of one colony and set them down temporarily in another. They are finding this out in the Cape Colony already, where burghers from the districts near Cape Town have been sent off a distance of 800 miles to fight the Basutos. If you had Confederation at this moment, you would find that, in the event of a disturbance in any part of South Africa, you would not get a man more into the field than you can get without Confederation—that is, supposing the Imperial troops were all taken away, and colonists left to control their own concerns in every respect. But, as long as England keeps Imperial troops in, and controls the policy of, any South African colony, then the Imperial Government is responsible for the peace and safety of that colony, and must act up to its responsibilities.

There is, then, nothing specially urgent in the defence question that bears upon the desirability of South African Confederation or Union. Let me show

you now why the question is as yet outside the limits of practical politics.

Do you appreciate the size of South Africa, the distances from place to place, the scanty means of communication, the time consumed in making even a comparatively short journey? Do you appreciate the fact that from Maritzburg to Pretoria it is farther than from London to Edinburgh, and that the only regular means of communication over that distance is by means of a post-cart, that runs twice a week? Do you appreciate the fact that along this road you may go for miles and miles without seeing a house? Fancy starting from London in a rickety two-wheeled vehicle, with six shaggy horses, and stopping, for a few hours' rest, at Peterborough; then driving on again to York, then to Newcastle, and so on; fancy the roads all desolate, mere tracks in the middle of an almost treeless landscape, with rivers coming in your way that have to be crossed in a "punt," or that possibly cannot be crossed at all. Communication between Natal and the Free State is very much the same; between the Free State and the Transvaal it is considerably worse. The sea-path between Natal and the Cape Colony is clear enough, but the overland road lies still through comparatively desolate and unpopulated districts. How is it possible for people to communicate with each other freely along such lines as these? How can they get

to know anything of each other's wishes and ideas? Cape Town newspapers are barely read in Natal; Natal newspapers are barely read in Cape Town. So, too, with the Dutch communities, the Free State, and the Transvaal. The population of each district centres, so to speak, round the seat of Government, and there are no means by which any free interchange of ideas can be provided for. How is it possible, under these circumstances, to secure all in a moment any of that consensus of opinion which must go before the establishment of a popularly governed Confederation? Supposing that Mr. Molteno had not proved the obstinate man he was,—supposing that the Confederation Conference had been carried out to the results Lord Carnarvon anticipated, and a Confederation formed off-hand, what would have been the result? Three years would not have passed before the communities thus hastily joined together would have been clamouring for a divorce.

Nor is this main question the only one that stands in the way. Who in England knows anything of the complicated local questions which must be discussed between the parties most concerned before anything like common action is possible? Take only the question of the Customs tariff. The Cape Colony import duty on all unspecified articles is 10 per cent *ad valorem*, and it is difficult to see

how the revenue could be maintained if it were fixed at any lower point. The Natal duty on all unspecified articles is only 6 per cent, and there is no doubt that Natal reaps a considerable benefit, so far as the inland trade is concerned, from this lower tariff. That the Cape looks with jealousy upon the lower tariff of Natal there can be no doubt, and if the Cape could by any means equalise the tariff of the two colonies, for the purpose of injuring the trade of Natal, it would certainly do so. But as the Cape tariff can hardly be lowered, this could only be done by the Natal tariff being raised. Why should the Natal tariff be raised to please the merchants of Port Elizabeth and East London? I once went closely into this question, and found that to equalise the tariffs of the two colonies the duties payable in Natal would in some instances have to be raised 500 or 600 per cent.

But the question has a still more serious aspect. Goods for the inland districts of the Free State and Transvaal pay duty in transit at the Natal and Cape Colony ports. Why should these States be deprived of the advantages afforded by the lower tariff of Natal? Why should the Cape and Natal be encouraged, or allowed, to join hands for the purpose of plundering the Free State and the Transvaal?

Then there is the question whether the inland

States ought to be allowed any drawback on the duties levied at Cape and Natal ports. At present no such drawback is allowed, the view taken by Natal politicians being that, as they are at the expense of keeping up a harbour and a road to the interior, they have a right to the duties levied on goods in transit. The plea may not be sound in every respect, but it is at least so reasonable that it would be the highest injustice to make alterations off-hand, and without the fullest and most careful consideration.

Then there is the question of competition. Is it not better that there should be a fair competition between the ports on the coast—that Natal should be left to push ahead in her own interest, rather than be subjected to the domination, ruled over by mercantile jealousy, of Cape politicians? The one thing that would best please a large class of Cape merchants at this moment would be to see Natal enterprise crippled by every possible means, and for this end, more than for any other, they will deprecate and sneer at any request on the part of Natal colonists for more complete self-government. When a Cape merchant talks to you of the probability of native troubles in Natal if the colonists are given any larger voice in native government, you know at once what he is thinking about. For he knows that as long as he can keep up an agitation on native questions in

Natal, and can shake his head over the prospect in store for the natives there, he is putting the brake on a competition which threatens to take the wind out of his own sails.

Then how is the native question to be dealt with under any system of union? Has the matter ever been considered at all? Lord Carnarvon thought he had dealt with it sufficiently when he threw a clause into his Confederation Bill giving the Crown a special right of veto in respect of legislation for natives. Knowing what you know of the past of the Colonial Office, you can guess how this arrangement would work. For a few years the right of veto would slumber, and the Colonial Legislatures would be left to do whatever they pleased with native interests of all kinds. Then suddenly the Colonial Office would one day wake up, and make up for three years of blameable neglect—for if responsibilities are undertaken, they ought to be discharged—by two years of abject mischief-making and interference. Then would follow more bloodshed, more recrimination, more spending of money for colonial purposes out of the Imperial treasury—in short, all the old bad work over and over again.

Looking at all these complicated matters, don't you think you have, on the whole, cause to be grateful to those who have put an extinguisher on Confederation for the present?

And yet there are undoubtedly tendencies to-

wards union—tendencies growing hopefully and surely, if you will only let them grow. Only beware of the mistake of thinking that union of the several South African States will inaugurate a South African millennium. It will do nothing of the kind.

CHAPTER XV.

WHAT IS WANTED.

WHAT, then, is wanted in South Africa, to give us a chance of placing the three-cornered problem which it presents in a fair way for solution?

Light—peace—patience.

Peace, perhaps, first of all. If in England, with its larger proportion, or at least its greater intrinsic weight, of higher political intelligence, you find that a state of war plays havoc with men's judgments and gives the supreme authority to some mere passing emotion—if this is so in England, how can it be otherwise in South Africa? In England, when war breaks out and you talk of the maintenance of British *prestige*, you talk of a thing no doubt possessing some reality, but still far away from your own doors. When war breaks out in South Africa, and the colonist talks of the maintenance of European *prestige*, he means a thing which touches his actual existence, and the existence of those who depend upon him and gather round his hearth. And yet you expect him to exercise more control over his feelings

than you exercise yourself under conditions far less accentuated. Do you think a colonist is a saint, that you look for such virtue from him?

Peace, then, is absolutely necessary. Things must be allowed to quiet down. The excitement which four years of Imperialism has created must be given time to subside. You cannot show a man ghosts and bogies, and frighten him into snatching up arms and rushing about, and then expect him to subside in an instant into an ordinary rational temper. The waves of the storm need time to sway themselves to rest—time, and quietude, during which men may forget all their bad dreams and harsh waking thoughts.

Peace—yes, and light—light above all things. Light clear, independent, and impartial, thrown on the picture by inquiry through men who have no official interest to serve or official reputation to protect. For sixty-five years since its final cession to England, South Africa has been governed in total darkness, and never once has even an attempt been made reasonably to enlighten Englishmen as to the nature of the questions to be solved, or the real reasons of the wars which they have had to pay for. You will think, perhaps, that I have levelled an exaggerated charge against the Colonial Office. I do not think it is exaggerated. But even if it were, no harm would be done if I could thereby impress you with the fact that the Colonial Office is itself a portion

of the network of complication which needs light to be thrown upon it, and that therefore no inquiry can be of the smallest value in which the Colonial Office has a voice.

Do you know what people in South Africa say when you talk to them about a Royal Commission? "A Royal Commission," they say, "would be of no use whatever, because it would simply prove whatever it was sent out to prove." The expression is perfectly justifiable. The first duty of a Royal Commission sent out by the Colonial Office would be to protect the Colonial Office and its officials from censure.

Remember that of all rabbit warrens of official corruption—offices in which personal interest and personal intrigue govern whatever is said and done, to the exclusion of consideration for the public welfare—the Colonial Office is the worst. I do not ask you to explore its ramifications at home. But it is absolutely necessary that you should be independent of its influence in South Africa, that you should be able to call its officials before you as you would call any other witness, and make them tell their own story, and, above all, produce their own documents. There is reason enough for saying this. There is a mass of documents belonging, for example, to the department of native affairs in Natal, which no one has ever been allowed to see, and which no one ever will be allowed to see, so long as the Colonial Office has

power to protect its officials from an authoritative inquiry.

This full and open and independent inquiry is what the country has to demand, and to see that it gets, utterly regardless of all official protest and ministerial squeamishness. The opportunity is here, and it must be seized. You are going—at least so it is said—to appoint a Royal Commission to examine into the Transvaal question, and you will, it is to be trusted and hoped, see that that Royal Commission is not merely a Colonial Office Commission, sent out to white-wash Sir William Lamyon and Sir Theophilus Shepstone, and whoever else may stand in need of the white-washer's brush. You must extend the scope of that inquiry, and make it thorough. You must dissipate for ever the fog of petty mystery with which Colonial Office officials surround themselves, like cuttle-fish in their own ink. You must let in light everywhere, and let those who are most concerned—the dwellers in South Africa—whether they be Blacks, or Boers, or British, see that you are for once in earnest, and mean what you say. Let them see that for once, the first time in the course of three-quarters of a century of British occupation of South Africa, you have the interests of the country really at heart. Don't shake your head over the proposition, but try it. You would not hesitate to spend two or three millions in a war with Dutchman or native. Spend a few thousands in the expenses

of your Commission, and the result will surprise you. You have seen with what enthusiasm British troops are received in a British Colony. Believe me—for I do not speak without knowledge—the advent of a Royal Commission, in which Colonial as well as Imperial interests were represented, empowered to let in light upon South African grievances and hopes, and bringing a promise that, as far as it lay in the power of the people and Government of England, the reasonable wishes of the population should be met, would be received with even a warmer enthusiasm than would be accorded to the Guards themselves. It would be the opening of a new day for South Africa, and nothing less.

Patience, too, you must have, as well as peace and light. Do you know what your temptation will be at the present moment? You have seen the constancy of the Dutch character, and your Royal Commission, if you send one, will show you the reality of Dutch grievances. Your first impulse will be to do justice to the Dutchman at the expense of the Englishman and the native. You will say—"This Dutchman is a fine fellow; a descendant of the Protestants who resisted religious oppression in the Netherlands; we find that he has been consistently slandered by interested Englishmen; we will shake hands with him over the graves of these brave men, and hope that even the grievous loss of life will not be without its compensating good. As

for the English colonists who have slandered him"—

Yes; but that is exactly what you must not say, or feel, or think. It is not the English colonists, as a body, who have slandered the Dutchman. It has been the interested land-jobbers, and the still more interested Colonial Office officials. For the English colonist has always lived on the best terms with the Dutch settler, and always would do so, unless wicked strife and dissension are stirred up between them—unless some successor of Sir Bartle Frere puts into practical force the maxim that English and Dutch are natural enemies in South Africa, just as Sir Bartle Frere himself put the maxim into force that black and white are natural enemies.

Remember that that seemingly cheap and easy method of playing off one section of the South African population against the other two is one of the things at the root of all the mischief that has happened since South Africa became a part of the British Empire, and every word I have written will have been thrown away unless I have managed to convey the impression that this seemingly cheap and easy method is to be for ever done away with and given up. What you have to do now is not to look for and emphasise the faults and failings of your three classes of South African population, but to get hold of and work upon the basis of their

governing virtues. You have the Englishman's love of progress, the Dutchman's love of independence, and the native's love of getting rich. And if you cannot, out of these three qualities, apart from any others, find a ladder out of the slough of South African complication, you must be strangely deficient in ingenuity.

But you must not only have light in the present; you must provide for light in the future. You cannot let in light for a moment upon the official cobwebs that hang round your South African possessions, and then leave things to disappear again into darkness. You must have a thorough and a complete change. You cannot permit a system to go on under which it was possible, as in the year 1878, for a war to be made over the heads of colonists, involving their homes in imminent risk, without their having the power to say a word either in objection or deprecation. You cannot allow a system to go on under which the public money of a colony is used by officials in England for the purpose of putting good things in the way of friendly contractors. You cannot allow a system to go on under which colonists, striving honestly to do their best with a limited revenue, are one day assailed by a Secretary of State for not making one pound equal to two, and the next day assailed for daring to act on the hint thus given. Go and talk to the colonists themselves about these matters, and they will make plenty of suggestions,

and valuable ones. And if officials in the Colonial Office, who now get their commissions and their bonuses, do not like the new order of things, they need not.

And you must have peace in the future, as well as light. There can be no doubt that light will greatly promote peace. Neither the Langalibalele affair nor the Zulu war would ever have occurred had Natal colonists possessed the right to know beforehand what was going forward. Mystery on the part of officials begets fear—perhaps it is intended to do so—on the part of colonists. Nothing is explained, and consequently everything is exaggerated. It is presumed—not that experience in any way justifies the presumption—that responsible officials know best the risks of the situation, and do not act without reason. The staunch old colonist who was magistrate in Langalibalele's district would, if he had had his own way, have arrested the contumacious chief—if he really was contumacious—without a word, and in the most friendly spirit imaginable. Officialism, for some reason best known to itself, objected, and thereupon followed the Langalibalele outbreak, with its miserable harvest of bitterness on both sides—bitterness which still vexes the colony of Natal. Months before the Zulu war broke out, another staunch old colonist, who knew the preparations for the invasion of Zululand that were going on, asked the question—or rather gave notice of the question—in the Natal

Legislative Council, "Who is responsible for the peace of this colony?" Had that question been put, and any intelligible answer given, the whole colony would have at once known what was in progress, and at least have had the opportunity of protesting. But the question was not allowed to be put. An officious Colonial Secretary, acting in the interest of the powers that then were, intervened. The questioner was brought under the influence of the very distinguished diplomatist who had the Zulu matter in hand, and—the question was withdrawn.

Light will tend to peace, for it will tend to lessen the chance of panic and alarm. It is when the colonist is alarmed that he becomes unreasonable and vindictive. If you point out, in reply, that the Cape Government went into the Basuto war with its eyes open, and on its own responsibility, I admit the fact. But the Cape Government was not then its own master. It was still under the influence of the diplomatist who brought about the Zulu war, and who instituted a uniform policy towards all South African natives. And it is not likely that Sir Bartle Frere will be again sent to South Africa.

Patience, too, you must have in the future, not less than in the present. If South African union will not come about to-morrow, why complain, or try to force it? If your united South Africa is to be

self-governing, the approach to such union must be the result of natural growth. Already, even within the last three or four years, much has been done towards making union possible. Our friend Mr. Donald Currie has done a good deal in this direction by his handy coasting steamers; the extension of the telegraphic system has done more; the development of railway enterprise will be even more effective in the same direction. Bring people within talking distance of each other, and they soon find out where their interests coincide. Anything that helps forward railway construction in South Africa, is a distinct addition to the chances of permanent union as well as of internal development. And I say it most emphatically, that if, being saved from a war that would have cost ten millions and advantaged you nothing, you could bring your mind to spend half that sum, or to guarantee the interest on it, in furthering railway construction in South Africa, you would soon see cause to feel that you had done well. The railway is your civiliser and consolidator of British rule in that part of the empire, and not the cannon or the bayonet.

Have I written strongly? Have I wearied you with a damnable iteration? You must pardon me, then, on the ground that it is impossible for me, knowing what I know of South Africa, knowing what it might become, and what is the nature

of the influences that stand in the way, to do otherwise than speak strongly. It is a country which, if you will believe me, every one who lives in it must love. I do not know whether I have given you this impression ; but I have at least tried to do so. I might have said much more. I might have spoken of the clear liquid atmosphere, through which, even at twelve miles' distance, you can see every stone and stump upon a hill-side ; of the long dry Natal winters, without a cloud for weeks and weeks ; of the moonlight that is like daylight ; of the cosy hospitable homes embosomed in gardens that grow of themselves ; of the giant krantzes and impenetrable gorges ; of the waterfalls that leap down hundreds of feet at a bound into fathomless pools ; of the autumn colours upon hill-side and wide veldt ; of the oranges that gleam over rose-covered hedge-rows ; of the flowers that spring up as by magic at the touch of the first spring shower. I might have spoken of the sea-side, where the curving yellow beach lines the blue plain of tumbling waves ; of the forest land where the leopard may still be found wandering at large ; of English-looking villages, through which runs the broad white highway, edged with broad margins of grass ; of the wooded kloofs loved of holiday makers ; of the clear brooks that drip down in strangely arched caverns. Or I might have spoken of the grandeur of the storm, the incredible

variety of the lightning that you can watch for hours when the storm has gone over; of the dark passes through the Drakensberg, where those three Natal volunteers lie buried, and where you will find, in out of the way corners, the grotesque drawings of the almost vanished Bushmen. If, however, you think it worth while to go there, you can see all these things for yourself, and you will own that I have not said a word too much in its praise.

What is it we want now? We want to give a chance to a country which, great though its possibilities, has never yet had a chance. We want to do this by putting on one side, for a time, the officialism that has been its bane, and by sending to it men with clear unbiassed minds and high moral courage, who shall enable people in England to see the country and the people of South Africa as they are. The problem to be solved is a complicated one, but not extraordinarily so. Any man of ordinary intelligence, who comes to examine it with an unprejudiced mind, and who is unswayed by personal interest, should find it not hard to deal with. The door is open at this moment; there is a pause in the march of events, an inclination to inquire, a spirit abroad of justice and patience. Do not let the opportunity be lost, for it may never occur again. Do not, when you might by a generous stepping aside out of the ordinary path, give a new impulse to South African

prosperity and happiness, be content with a make-shift settlement, with a half-fulfilled duty, with a problem only half solved after all.

That is what I ask you to urge and to strive for. Is it possible that what is needed will be done?

THE END

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